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ABSTRACT

This special supplement to an education newspaper focuses on the status of bilingual education in the United States. Fifteen articles discuss the historical perspective, research needs, programs, and problems. Topics addressed include: the role of immigration in the development of bilingual education; federal bilingual education policy; limited-English-speaking students; the English-only movement; translation of bilingual education research into policy; effectiveness of bilingual education; extralinguistic information; advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism; controversial research; the research practice relationship; Indian bilingual education; and the future of bilingual education. (CB)

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EDUCATION WEEK

Bilingual Education:

Language, Learning, and Politics

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By James Crawford

Two decades after its revival in the United States, bilingual education has established itself as a valid pedagogical approach.

Among educators, the word is getting out: Children who begin school without English can thrive in well-designed programs that build on their native-language skills. Increasingly, researchers are documenting the benefits of bilingual methodologies in promoting academic development at no cost to the acquisition of English.

Politically, however, bilingual education has never been more vulnerable. It is a prime target of the burgeoning "English-only" movement, which opposes bilingual services on ideological grounds, arguing that they impede the assimilation of new immigrants and threaten to divide Americans along language lines.

Last fall, the broad appeal of such arguments was demonstrated in California, where 73 [illegible] approved a [illegible] constitutional amendment declaring English the official language. The measure could imperil an extension of California's bilingual-education law, now under consideration in the state legislature.

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration, official Secretary William J. Bennett, is leading an assault on the cornerstone of the Bilingual Education Act—the requirement that most federal grants to support the instruction of limited-English-proficient children go to programs making some use of the students' native tongue.

Despite expenditures of $1.8 billion under the law since 1968, Mr. Bennett says, "we have no evidence that the children we sought to help . . . have benefited." He insists that research remains inconclusive on whether bilingual education works, and he voices his own skepticism: "This educational method imposed from Washington [has done] very little to help students learn English."

Secretary Bennett is pressing the Congress to allow unrestricted federal funding for such English-only alternatives as "structured immersion," an approach that he says "shows great promise."

Never has the breach been wider between the U.S. Education Department and professionals in the field of bilingual education. Bilingual researchers and practitioners accuse Mr. Bennett of ignoring a growing body of evidence documenting bilingual program successes. They note that the Secretary can point to only one published study on structured immersion in the United States.

Bilingual-education advocates acknowledge that there are plenty of weak bilingual programs. But they say it is unfair to judge the concept of native-language instruction with studies that fail to differentiate among a diversity of educational treatments labeled "bilingual."

The enormous variation in the quality of bilingual-education programs, in their financial and administrative support, in the availability of

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A SPECIAL REPORT

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About This Report

James Crawford, Washington editor of *Education Week*, has covered bilingual education since he joined the staff in December 1986. Information for this special report was gathered over the past seven months.

A limited supply of additional copies of this report will be available at $2 each for single copies, $1 per copy for 10 to 25 copies, and 75 cents per copy plus postage for quantities of more than 25. Please send check or money order to Education Week, Suite 775, 1255 22nd St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

Asians and Hispanics, who together represented 7.9 percent of the U.S. population in 1980, are expected to make up 12.3 percent by the year 2000 and 18.1 percent by 2030.

Bilingual Education: In Center Of Research and Policy Debates

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qualified staff, and in teaching methodologies was evident in a recent California survey. The study found that teachers were using only English in nearly half of the so-called "bilingual classrooms" observed.

While many bilingual programs hurry to "mainstream" children as quickly as possible into regular classrooms, other approaches—about 15 percent in a national survey—strive to maintain, rather than to replace, the students' native language. Paradoxically, programs that stress the development of first-language skills have produced some of the best results in teaching English.

Thanks to advances over the past decade in linguistics and cognitive psychology, bilingual educators know a lot more about how children learn a second language and about how language development affects overall academic achievement.

This emerging theory has helped, for example, to shape an innovative bilingual program at the Rockwood School in Calexico, Calif. Ninety-five percent of the students arrive at the school, just across the border from Mexico, speaking little or no English, and nearly 80 percent come from homes receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Before the new bilingual curriculum was introduced in 1982, achievement levels at Rockwood were the lowest among the district's five elementary schools. Three years later, they were the highest. Today, Rockwood's 6th graders are scoring near state norms in English language arts and above the norms in mathematics.

As immigration swells the number of limited-English-proficient children in the schools, the need for such programs is increasing. California, one of the few states to monitor its LEP population, now has 867,000 limited-English-proficient students—up 143 percent since 1977.

Asians and Hispanics, who together represented 7.9 percent of the U.S. population in 1980, are expected to make up 12.3 percent by the year 2000 and 18.1 percent by 2030, according to the Population Reference Bureau. Because they tend to be younger than other ethnic groups, on average, the new immigrants' impact on the schools will be even larger.

And educators note that not only immigrants need special language services. Large percentages of Puerto Rican and American Indian children have limited English skills, as do many Mexican-American and Chinese-American children who were born in the United States.

Nevertheless, strong feelings about the immigrant experience—about what it means to be an American—are bound up with popular attitudes toward bilingual education. For some, the very idea of bilingual education is an insult to immigrant forebears, who are remembered as having proudly shed their native tongues to become Americans.

Skeptics often argue that millions of language minorities have not only learned English, but have succeeded without bilingual education. And writers such as Richard Rodriguez, author of *Hunger of Memory*, express gratitude for having been forced to learn English through the "submersion" method.

But they are the exceptions, argues Stephen D. Krashen, a professor of linguistics at the University of Southern California. "There's a selection bias," he says. "We hear from those who've made it. We haven't heard from those who didn't. They don't write books and they don't write letters to the editor, because they can't."

The widely accepted immigrant myth—the bootstraps rise to success and its "sink or swim" imperative of learning English—features no special help to ease the transition of today's newcomers.

But in fact, historians say, a diversity of ethnic cultures and languages has flourished in North America since before the Pilgrims landed, and struggles to preserve them have spanned much of the nation's history.

In this tradition, bilingual education has played a central role.

Bilingual Education: A Historical Perspective

Bilingual Education Traces Its U.S. Roots to the Colonial Era

Bilingual education has been part of the immigrant experience in America since the Colonial period, when native-language schooling was the rule rather than the exception.

By the late 17th century, at least 18 different tongues were spoken by European ethnic groups, not to mention the scores spoken by Indian tribes. While English was most prevalent, German, Dutch, French, Swedish, and Polish were also common.

New arrivals fought vigorously to preserve their native customs, and language loyalties were strong. Indeed, the Pilgrims had left Holland in part because they feared their children were losing English.

Where immigrant groups settled in enclaves, they naturally taught their children in their own languages, despite some attempts to impose English instruction.

Benjamin Franklin, a politician who was frustrated by his inability to influence German-speakers in Pennsylvania, urged in 1753 that English schools be established in their communities. But German parents resisted such efforts.

During the American Revolution, anti-British sentiment inspired a campaign to discard English as the official language of the new nation, according to Diego Castellanos, a historian of bilingual education. But proposals to replace English with German—or, by some accounts, Hebrew—failed in the Continental Congress, writes Mr. Castellanos, an official of the New Jersey state education department, in *The Best of Two Worlds*.

With mounting pressures for political unity, English became more common at ethnic schools—sometimes as a class and sometimes as a medium of instruction.

Still, no uniform language policy prevailed during the 19th century. Bilingual education was accepted in areas where ethnic groups had influence and rejected where anti-immigrant sentiment was strong.

> Wherever immigrant groups possessed sufficient political power . . . foreign languages were introduced into [the] schools.
>
> — Diego Castellanos, historian

By the mid-1800's, public and parochial German-English schools were operating in such cities as Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. One survey of school records in the Midwest found that at least 231,700 children were taught in German in 1900.

In Ohio, an 1839 law authorized instruction in English, German, or both, writes Heinz Kloss in *The American Bilingual Tradition*. Louisiana adopted the same statute in 1847, substituting French for German. Two years after its annexation in 1848, the Territory of New Mexico authorized Spanish-English education. Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oregon also passed laws sanctioning instruction in languages other than English.

"For much of the 19th century," Mr. Castellanos says, "certainly before the 1880's, the [locally controlled] structure of American public education allowed immigrant groups to incorporate linguistic and cultural traditions into the schools. . . . Wherever immigrant groups possessed sufficient political power—be they Italian, Polish, Czech, French, Dutch, German—foreign languages were introduced into elementary and secondary schools, either as separate subjects or as languages of instruction."

In advocating such an approach, William Torrey Harris, superintendent of the St. Louis schools in the 1870's and later U.S. Commissioner of Education, argued: "National memories and aspirations; family traditions, customs, and habits; moral and religious observances cannot be suddenly

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Bilingual Policy Has Taken Shape Along Two Distinct Federal Tracks

Over the past two decades, federal policy on bilingual education has proceeded along two tracks—financial aid to support programs for limited-English-proficient children and civil-rights enforcement to ensure these students an equal chance to succeed in school.

Although both tracks have led to increased educational opportunities, they have not always run side by side. In the beginning, the government authorized funding for bilingual instruction before it ever considered the issue of language discrimination in the schools.

In the mid-1970's, bilingual education was prescribed as both a remedy for civil-rights violations and a condition for receiving federal grants. But today, while special language assistance is required for children who could not otherwise participate in the classroom, the only federal mandate for bilingual education is for schools that seek aid.

Title VII, a New Law

When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law on Jan. 2, 1968, it was the first time the federal government had addressed the unique needs of students with limited-English proficiency.

The new law, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provided resources to support educational programs, to train teachers and aides, to develop and disseminate instructional materials, and to establish parent-involvement projects. Despite its title, the original Bilingual Education Act did not require bilingual instruction.

The law's focus was explicitly compensatory, aimed at children who were both poor and "educationally disadvantaged because of their inability to speak English." The question of whether the act's goal was to speed the transition to English or to promote bilingualism through language-maintenance programs was left hanging.

Senator Ralph Yarborough, the measure's prime advocate, told fellow lawmakers, "It is not the purpose of the bill to create pockets of different languages throughout the country . . . not to stamp out the mother tongue, and not to make their mother tongue the dominant language, but just to try to make those children fully literate in English."

Mr. Yarborough—like the President, a Democrat from Texas—encountered his stiffest resistance from the White House. Even more than Mr. Johnson's personal animus toward Senator Yarborough, the tight federal budget, squeezed by a proliferation of Great Society programs and the Vietnam war, was an obstacle.

Commissioner of Education Harold Howe 2nd, in testimony before Senator Yarborough's special subcommittee on bilingual education, argued that aid could be provided under the existing Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Indeed, Title III was already supporting 18 bilingual and English-as-a-second-language programs in the Southwest.

Also, Mr. Howe and others objected to the limited scope of Mr. Yarborough's proposal, which would have aided only Spanish-speaking children. In the end, a compromise drafted by Representative James Scheuer, Democrat of New York, applied Title VII to all children of limited-English-speaking ability.

Notwithstanding the differences over details, there was remarkably little controversy over the idea of federal support for bilin-

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Programs Supported by Title VII, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Bilingual Education Act), 1986-87

Total Appropriation	$133.3 million*
Children served	179,314
Family English literacy participants served	17,442
Language groups served	approximately 145
Part A: Support for instructional programs	**$91 million****
• Transitional bilingual education:	
107 new grants	$20,746,013
412 continuing grants	$55,579,194
164,650 children served	
• Special alternative (English-only) instructional programs:	
35 continuing grants	$4,721,850
8,281 children served	
• Developmental (maintenance) bilingual programs:	
2 new grants	$225,754
262 children served	
• Programs of academic excellence (demonstration projects):	
12 continuing grants	$2,154,667
No children directly served	
• Family English literacy:	
16 new grants	$2,077,681
4 continuing grants	$517,484
17,442 served (mostly parents)	
• Special populations (preschool, special education, gifted and talented) programs:	
21 new grants	$3,008,304
8,121 children served	
• Instructional materials development:	
2 new grants	$181,604
Total Part A: 611 competitive grants	**$89 million**
Part B: Data collection and research	**$10.2 million****
• Grants to state education agencies (data gathering and program evaluation):	
48 grants	$4,725,932
• Evaluation assistance centers:	
2 competitive contracts	$500,000 per year (approximate)
• The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education:	
1 competitive contract	$947,581 per year
Part C: Training and Technical Assistance	**$32.1 million****
• Training of bilingual teachers, aides, and administrators:	
85 new grants	$12,982,258
51 continuing grants	$5,811,492
• Short-term training programs for educational personnel:	
12 new grants	$1,051,413
8 continuing grants	$882,221
• Fellowships to support graduate study in bilingual education:	
313 fellows at 31 institutions	$2,892,704
• Multifunctional resource (technical assistance and training) centers:	
16 competitive contracts	$8,756,136

* Funding level reflects the appropriation for fiscal year 1986, when program awards for school year 1986-87 were made. For fiscal year 1987, the Title VII appropriation will be $143.1 million.

** Amount appropriated, not necessarily spent. Under Part A, for example, $2 million has been held in reserve pending the outcome of a lawsuit involving the Chicago school system.

SOURCE: U.S. Education Department, office of planning, budget, and evaluation.

Histories of Bilingual Education, Immigrants Are Intertwined

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removed or changed without disastrously weakening the personality."

A resurgence of nativism in the late 19th century—a backlash against the foreign-born, led by such organizations as the Know-Nothing Party—marked the beginning of a decline for bilingual education. St. Louis canceled its German-English program in 1888 after redistricting watered down German voting strength. Louisville, Ky., and St. Paul soon followed suit, allowing German to be taught only as a foreign language in the upper grades.

New strains of xenophobia flourished as Italians and Jews began to outnumber the Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians in the immigrant stream, historians say. At the same time, social workers and educators addressed poverty among the new arrivals with a program of "Americanization." Increasingly, the English language was emphasized as a force for civilization and social cohesion.

Following victory in the Spanish-American War, the U.S. government imposed English as the medium of instruction in its new colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. "The need to consolidate the nation's territorial gains and solidify its political processes seems to have played an important role in this drive toward cultural and linguistic homogeneity," says Josue M. Gonzalez, director of the federal bilingual-education office in the late 1970's.

In Puerto Rico, because "the population was entirely Spanish-speaking and 85 percent illiterate," Mr. Castellanos says, the English-only rule "proved devastating."

In 1916, the U.S. Commissioner of Education compromised and allowed Spanish instruction in grades 1-4, Spanish and English in grade 5, and English only thereafter—a policy that lasted until 1948.

On the mainland, President Theodore Roosevelt lectured immigrants: "There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism. . . . Any man who comes here . . . must adopt the institutions of the United States, and, therefore, he must adopt the language which is now the native tongue of our people, no matter what the several strains in our blood may be. It would not be merely a misfortune, but a crime to perpetuate differences of language in this country."

Mr. Roosevelt advocated expanded opportunities for immigrants to learn English and the deportation of those who failed to do so within five years.

With the approach of World War I, anti-German feeling spelled trouble not only for German-language instruction, but for all bilingual-education programs. Between 1903 and 1923, the number of states mandating English as the language of instruction—in some cases extending the requirement to private schools—grew from 14 to 34, according to Mr. Castellanos. In some states, it became illegal to use German on the street, on the telephone, or in church.

In its 1923 ruling in *Meyer v. Nebraska*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Nebraska law prohibiting foreign-language teaching before the 9th grade.

"The protection of the Constitution extends to all those who speak other languages as well as to those born with English on the tongue," the Court said. "Perhaps it would be highly advantageous if all had a ready understanding of our ordinary speech, but this cannot be coerced by methods which conflict with the Constitution—a desirable end cannot be promoted by prohibited means."

Still, the trend had been established: Bilingual education was virtually eradicated throughout the nation by what Joshua Fishman, a Yeshiva University psychologist, describes as "the anti-hyphenation, anti-foreign language, anti-immigration movement" of the period between World Wars I and II.

Roughly during the same period, the study of foreign languages, including Latin, declined dramatically, from 83 percent of high-school students in 1910 to 22 percent in 1948, according to Mr. Castellanos.

"This linguistic equivalent of 'book burning' worked admirably well" in forcing assimilation, Mr. Gonzalez writes.

"But," he adds, "it worked best with the Northern European immigrants," who had a "cultural affinity" with American values and shared a "Caucasian racial history."

For other language minorities—and especially those with dark complexions, he noted—English-only schooling brought difficulties. While their cultures were suppressed, discrimination barred these groups from full acceptance into society.

> Any man who comes here . . . must adopt the institutions of the United States, and, therefore, he must adopt the language which is now the native tongue of our people, no matter what the several strains in our blood may be.
>
> — President Theodore Roosevelt

Language Suppression

The Cherokee Indians, after their forcible removal to Oklahoma in 1838, had established an educational system and achieved a 90 percent literacy rate in their native language. And these schools "used bilingual materials to such an extent," writes Arnold H. Leibowitz, an education historian, "that Oklahoma Cherokees had a higher English-literacy level than the white populations of either Texas or Arkansas."

Although the U.S. government had recognized the language rights of the Cherokees and other tribes, in 1879 it began forcing Indian children into off-reservation boarding schools.

The curriculum was exclusively in English, and students were punished when caught using their own languages. This policy, soon followed by bans on Indian religious observances and mandatory haircuts for Indian men on reservations, was seen as part of a campaign to suppress Indian cultures.

Gradually, the Cherokees were transformed from the most literate to the least literate tribe.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs later rescinded the ban on Indian languages—although English remained the language of the classroom—in schools both on and off the reservations. But punishment for native-language use, such as washing children's mouths out with soap, continued unofficially until the late 1940's, according to Indians who speak from personal experience.

Mexican-American students endured similar treatment in the Southwest. "Spanish detention"—being kept after school for using Spanish—continued to be a formal method of punishment in the Rio Grande Valley in the late 1960's, according to an investigation by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights published in 1972.

One south Texas principal, quoted in the commission's report, explained the disciplinary policy in this way:

"Our school is predominantly Latin American—97 percent. We try to discourage the use of Spanish on the playground, in the halls, and in the classroom. We feel that the reason so many of our pupils are reading two to three years below grade level is because their English vocabulary is so limited. We are in complete accord that it is excellent to be bilingual or multilingual, but we must . . . stress the fact that practice makes perfect—that English is a very difficult language to master."

Until 1973, it was a crime in Texas to use a language other than English as the medium of public instruction. A teacher in Crystal City, Tex., was indicted in 1970 for conducting a history class in Spanish, although the case was later dismissed.

'Missionary-Style Assimilation'

After World War II, coercive policies gave way to an emphasis on treating the minority child's "cultural deprivation" and "language disability." Mr. Roosevelt's "military-style assimilation" was replaced by a "missionary style," according to Colman B. Stein, a consultant on immigrant education.

"Just as missionaries move in after soldiers have pacified the terrain," Mr. Stein says, "educators of the postwar era gradually projected a softer approach to assimilation."

English as a second language, a methodology developed in the 1930's to teach foreign diplomats and university students English, was extended to language-minority children.

"Pullout classes" were perhaps the most common form of E.S.L. instruction. Students were removed from regular, "sink or swim" classrooms—typically for 45 minutes a day, two to five times a week—for compensatory instruction. Unlike remedial reading, E.S.L. techniques took a child's lack of oral English proficiency into account.

Still, its availability was not widespread. In a civil-rights commission survey, only 5.5 percent of Mexican-American children in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas were enrolled in E.S.L. classes in 1968-69.

While many educators characterized E.S.L. instruction as better than nothing, they still saw it as limited.

"By dealing with the student simply as a non-English speaker," according to the commission, "most E.S.L. classes fail to expose children to approaches, attitudes, and materials which take advantage of the rich Mexican-American heritage."

Limited-English-proficient students learned the language too slowly through E.S.L. instruction to keep up in other subjects, Mr. Castellanos says. And the approach of replacing Spanish with English often produced "half-lingual children: stutterers in thought, stammerers in spirit," he adds.

The E.S.L. approach by itself appeared to be doing little to improve the students' educational performance. In the 1960's, the dropout rate for Puerto Rican students in New York City was estimated at 60 percent, and the rest were almost automatically assigned to vocational tracks. In 1963, the city awarded 331 academic diplomas to Puerto Ricans—representing no more than 1 percent of the total Puerto Rican enrollment—and of the graduates, only 28 went on to college.

Also, based on their performance on English I.Q. tests, disproportionate numbers of language-minority children ended up in special classes for the educationally handicapped. In the early 1960's, Hispanic children in Texas were still overrepresented by 315 percent in the "learning-disabled" category.

Coral Way Experiment

Modern bilingual education got its start, however, not among Mexican-Americans or Puerto Ricans, but among a relatively privileged minority—Cubans who fled to Miami after the Cuban revolution in 1959. These Hispanics of European stock were light-skinned and largely from the professional classes, Mr. Gonzalez says. Many had taught school in Cuba, and Florida authorities helped them become recertified—one of several programs to assist these politically favored refugees.

To serve this group, the Dade County school district provided not only E.S.L. instruction, but, in 1961, it initiated a Spanish-for-Spanish-speakers program. Two years later, it set up a full-fledged bilingual program—the nation's first in probably half a century.

Established at the Coral Way Elementary School, the experiment was open to both English- and Spanish-speakers. Not a compensatory program, the objective was fluent bilingualism for both groups. Pauline Rojas and Ralph Robinett, E.S.L. specialists who had worked in Puerto Rico, directed the effort with the help of Cuban educators.

Beginning in September 1963, Coral Way's 350 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders were grouped by language. Cuban children received Spanish instruction in the morning and English in the afternoon; for English-speaking children, the schedule was reversed. During lunch, music, and art, as well as on the playground, the two groups were mixed.

Results were immediately promising, as students appeared to progress, regardless of the language of instruction.

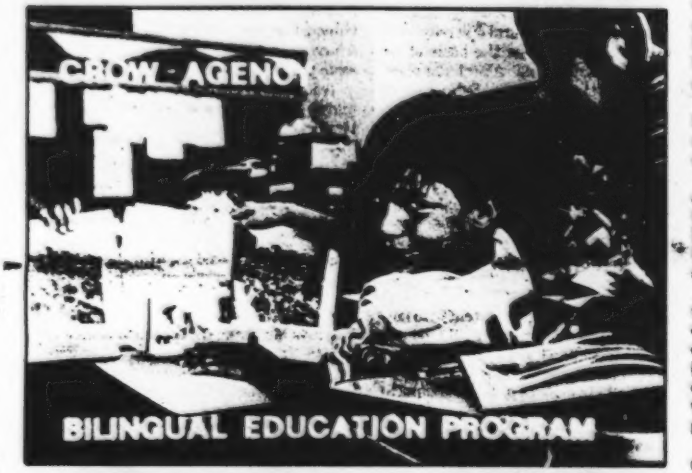
"The pupils in Coral Way are rapidly becoming 'culturally advantaged,' " a 1966 report by the district concludes. "They are learning to operate effectively in two languages and two cultures."

Indeed, Coral Way was, in most respects, deemed a success. In English reading, both language groups did as well as, or better than, counterparts in monolingual English schools, and the Cuban children achieved equivalent levels in Spanish. The Anglo students, however, fell short in Spanish reading achievement.

"In retrospect," says Kenji Hakuta, professor of psychology at Yale University, "the difference between the two groups was not unexpected, since the predominant language of the environment is English." The Cuban children had an advantage because, unlike their English-speaking peers, they received high-quality exposure to the second language in and out of the classroom.

In any case, Mr. Hakuta says, "the feasibility of bilingual education was established." Variants of the Coral Way approach were applied elsewhere in Dade County, and gradually, as educators saw its benefits, the model spread to other districts.

Federal and state bilingual-education laws followed. But, many educators note, government intervention changed the focus—from an enrichment model aimed at developing fluency in two languages to a compensatory program designed to help children overcome the "language handicap" of not speaking English.



In the late 1800's, Indian children, forced by the U.S. government into off-reservation boarding schools where the curricula were exclusively in English, were punished when they were caught using their native languages.

Suits Prompted U.S. Officials To Address Rights Questions

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gual education. Ten years earlier, foreign-language instruction had begun to make a comeback in the aftermath of sputnik and the Congress's passage of the National Defense Education Act. And political winds in the late 1960's favored more attention for Hispanics, who had been largely passed over by the new anti-poverty and civil-rights laws.

The National Education Association had drawn attention to the plight of Spanish-speaking children with its "Tucson survey" of 1965-66, painting a picture of educational neglect in that Arizona city—inadequate facilities and materials, a lack of trained teachers, and the scandal of "sink or swim" schooling. During hearings on Senator Yarborough's bill, representatives of the N.E.A. and "The Invisible Minority," a pamphlet describing the survey, commanded center stage.

In endorsing the bill, Senator George Murphy, Republican of California, noted that Gov. Ronald Reagan had recently signed legislation repealing California's English-only school statute. (In 1972, Mr. Reagan approved the state's first bilingual-education law.)

As with any idea whose time has come politically, members of Congress scrambled to affix their names. Thirty-seven bilingual-education bills were introduced in 1967.

Expenditures were another matter, however. The 90th Congress approved no funding for Title VII in the first year, 1968-69. For the next school year, it appropriated $7.5 million, enough to finance 76 projects serving 27,000 children.

The federal funding effectively doubled the number of children enrolled in bilingual classrooms in the United States. In 1968, only 26,000 students received bilingual instruction, according to Heinz Kloss, an education historian. By 1972, the total had risen to 112,000 of the estimated 5 million language-minority children of school age.

In 1971, Massachusetts became the first state to pass a bilingual-education law; by the early 1980's, 30 states had such statutes. Nine required native-language instruction under certain circumstances, and 21 provided financial aid to bilingual programs. While a few states continue to prohibit instruction in languages other than English, these laws are no longer enforced.

Civil-Rights Policy

The second track of federal policy on bilingual education began to take shape around 1970, prompted by civil-rights litigation alleging that equal opportunities were being denied to language-minority students.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 extended its anti-discrimination guarantees to national origin, by the late 1960's federal officials were still restricting their attention in the schools to race bias against blacks.

La Raza Unida Party, a militant Chicano group in Crystal City, Tex., took matters into its own hands. In 1969, it organized school boycotts to protest the segregation and unequal treatment of Spanish-speaking students. Bilingual education was among its demands and—after the party won a majority of seats on the local school board—among its innovations.

Meanwhile, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and other language-minority parents began to sue school districts, challenging officials' failure to address their children's language needs.

Finally, on May 25, 1970, the U.S. government entered the fray. J. Stanley Pottinger, director of the federal office for civil rights, informed "school districts with more than 5 percent national-origin-minority group children" of their obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which outlaws discrimination in federally supported programs.

First, he said in a memorandum, where children had limited-English skills, "the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students." Though districts were not directed to establish bilingual-education programs, the memo demanded that some special language instruction be offered.

Also, children could not be assigned to classes for the handicapped "on the basis of criteria which essentially measure or evaluate English-language skills," Mr. Pottinger said. Nor could schools shuttle children along vocational tracks toward an "educational dead-end" instead of teaching them English. Finally, school administrators had to communicate with parents in a language they could understand.

While the memo carved out new territory for O.C.R. enforcement of Title VI—including the threat to cut off federal education subsidies as a last resort—the immediate reaction in school districts was muted. Colman B. Stein, an education historian, writes that in Beeville, Tex., the superintendent's only response was to redesignate the vocational track as "career education."

Court Mandates

If the executive branch was slow to get results, the federal courts were not. For example:

- In 1972, in the case of *Serna* v. *Portales Municipal Schools*, a U.S. District Judge ordered a New Mexico school district to provide instruction in the children's native language and culture as part of a desegregation plan. Upholding the decision two years later, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit ruled that Title VI gave Hispanic students "a right to bilingual education."
- In 1974, Aspira, a Puerto Rican advocacy group, won a consent decree that established a bilingual program for Spanish-dominant children in New York City. The agreement, the result of a suit filed on behalf of 150,000 Hispanic students, remains in effect today.
- In 1981, in the most sweeping court order, U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice cited past discrimination by the Texas Education Agency and mandated bilingual instruction in grades K-12 throughout Texas.

Not only had the state segregated students in inferior "Mexican schools," the judge said, but the state had "formerly vilified the language, culture, and heritage of these children with grievous results." A year later, however, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reversed the ruling in the case, *U.S.* v. *Texas*.

Today, the most important court case regarding language-minority students—and the only such case to reach the U.S. Supreme Court—remains *Lau* v. *Nichols*. The lawsuit originated in 1969, when a poverty lawyer in San Francisco learned that a client's child, Kinney Lau, was failing in school because he could not understand the language of instruction.

The class-action suit alleged that the district's 1,800 Chinese students were being denied education on "equal terms"—the High Court's standard in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*—because of their limited-English skills.

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Lau Still the Key Case Involving Language-Minority Students

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San Francisco school officials argued that, unlike the 1954 *Brown* case, there was no discrimination because there was no segregation. The same instruction was offered to all students, they said, without regard to national origin, and the district was not to blame for the Chinese children's "language deficiency." Federal district and appeals courts agreed.

But in 1974, the Supreme Court unanimously overruled the lower courts. "There is no equality of treatment," wrote Justice William O. Douglas, "merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the Chinese-speaking children were entitled to special assistance to enable them to participate equally in the school program, the Court said. "Sink or swim" was unacceptable.

The Court did not invoke Constitutional guarantees—or, in legal parlance, the opinion "did not reach" the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Title VI, whose implications were spelled out by Mr. Pottinger's memorandum, was sufficient basis for requiring extra help for children with limited English skills, according to Justice Douglas.

Also, the Court stopped short of mandating bilingual education—an omission that the program's critics have interpreted as "upholding flexibility" for school districts. But because the *Lau* plaintiffs had earlier dropped their request for bilingual education, the Court's failure to order it was customary; it conformed with Supreme Court procedure. The opinion said nothing for or against flexibility.

"No specific remedy is urged upon us," Justice Douglas said in the preface to his opinion. "Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instructions to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others. Petitioners ask only that the Board of Education be directed to apply its expertise to the problem and rectify the situation."

In the end, San Francisco officials signed a consent decree with the plaintiffs to provide bilingual instruction for the city's Chinese, Filipino, and Hispanic children.

Lau Remedies

The *Lau* ruling attracted little public notice at the time, receiving a one-sentence mention in the Jan. 22, 1974, edition of *The New York Times*.

But the office for civil rights grasped the magnitude of the enforcement job ahead. In 1975, its investigators visited 334 districts with large numbers of language-minority children and found that "most . . . utterly failed to meet their responsibilities," according to David S. Tatel, who later became director of the O.C.R. Meanwhile, as mandated by the Supreme Court, a task force led by Martin H. Gerry drew up guidelines for "educational approaches which would constitute appropriate 'affirmative steps' to be taken by a noncomplying school district 'to open up its instructional program.'"

Education Commissioner Terrel H. Bell announced these so-called "*Lau* remedies" on Aug. 11, 1975. They told districts, among other things, how to identify and evaluate children with limited-English skills, what instructional treatments would be appropriate, when children were ready for mainstream classrooms, and what professional standards teachers should meet.

Most significant, the remedies went beyond the *Lau* decision and mandated bilingual education for elementary-school children who spoke little or no English.

> It is not the purpose of the bill to create pockets of different languages . . . but just to try to make those children fully literate in English.
>
> — Senator Ralph Yarborough

"English as a second language is a necessary component" of bilingual instruction, the guidelines added, but "since an E.S.L. program does not consider the affective or cognitive development of the students . . . an E.S.L. program [by itself] *is not* appropriate." For secondary-school students, the guidelines said, English-only compensatory instruction would usually be permissible.

Hastily drafted without an opportunity for public comment, the *Lau* remedies lacked the legal status of regulations. In practice, though, the guidelines had the full force of the federal government behind them, as the O.C.R. embarked on a campaign of aggressive enforcement. Where federal investigators found that the civil rights of language-minority students were being violated, they used the *Lau* remedies as a basis to negotiate consent agreements, or "*Lau* plans," with offending districts.

Title VII Evolves

By 1974, when the Bilingual Education Act came up for reauthorization, it had developed a strong constituency among Hispanics and influential allies on Capitol Hill. Title VII's budget had increased to $50 million, and Senators Edward Kennedy and Walter Mondale, both Democrats, moved to expand the program.

As amended, the law dropped the poverty criterion—previously, participants had to come from families with incomes below $3,000 a year—and, for the first time, Title VII required programs receiving grants to include instruction in the children's native language and culture.

While "bilingual-bicultural education" was sanctioned as a route to English acquisition, the 1974 amendments failed to resolve the tension between the goals of transition to English and maintenance of a native language. Both approaches remained eligible for funding.

In instructions for grant applicants in 1971, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had said, "It must be remembered that the ultimate goal of bilingual education is a student who functions well in two languages on any occasion." But in December 1974, before President Gerald Ford signed the 1974 amendments, H.E.W. Undersecretary Frank Carlucci issued a new interpretation of Congressional intent:

"The cultural pluralism of American society is one of its greatest assets, but such pluralism is a private matter of local choice, and not a proper responsibility of the federal government. . . . [The goal of Title VII is] to assist children of limited- or non-English speaking ability to gain competency in English so that they may enjoy equal educational opportunity—and *not* to require cultural pluralism."

Politically, the maintenance issue was to become bilingual education's Achilles heel. Beginning in the mid-1970's, a backlash developed against federal expenditures to promote ethnic pride or to preserve minority languages. Critics argued against diverting federal dollars from the twin imperatives of teaching English and assimilating children into the mainstream.

"The American taxpayer, while recognizing the existence of cultural diversity, still wants the schools to be the basis of an American melting pot," Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, wrote in a 1974 editorial. "While the need for the child to feel comfortable and be able to communicate is clear, it is also clear that what these children need is intensive instruction in English, so that they may as soon as possible function with other children in regular school programs."

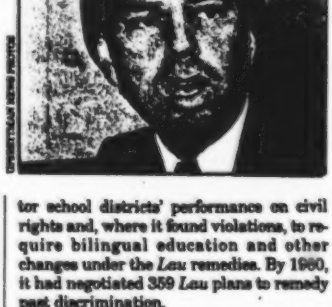
President Carter, whose Administration was generally supportive of bilingual education, told his Cabinet, "I want English taught, not ethnic culture."

Reflecting a growing discontent with language-maintenance programs, the education amendments of 1978 excluded them from federal assistance under Title VII. The new law also instructed grant recipients to use native-language instruction "to the extent necessary" for children to become competent in English.

At the same time, eligibility for assistance was expanded to "limited-English-proficient" students—in other words, to include reading and writing, as well as speaking skills.

Regulatory Suicide

Meanwhile, the O.C.R. continued to monitor school districts' performance on civil rights and, where it found violations, to require bilingual education and other changes under the *Lau* remedies. By 1980, it had negotiated 359 *Lau* plans to remedy past discrimination.



A majority of districts cooperated, albeit with some grumbling about the government's "heavy-handedness," and many L.E.P. children received special help for the first time.

In 1977, for example, Alhambra, Calif., had no bilingual education and minimal English-as-a-second-language instruction. Today, 10 years after the O.C.R. cited it for civil-rights violations, the district runs highly regarded bilingual programs in Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin, and requires every teacher to be trained in the latest E.S.L. techniques. This year, it will do so without any support from Title VII.

But there was resistance to the O.C.R.'s efforts as well.

As a result of one such dispute in 1978, the O.C.R. entered into a consent agreement with a group of school districts in Alaska in which it pledged to issue formal regulations, rather than continue relying on the *Lau* remedies. But the H.E.W. took its time studying the legal issues, and the creation of the new Education Department added to delays in the drafting of the regulations.

Two years later, shortly before the 1980 election, President Carter acted. In what was widely viewed as a political move to win Hispanic support, his Administration proposed regulations even more prescriptive than the *Lau* remedies. Under the *Lau* regulations, bilingual education would be mandated in schools with at least 20 L.E.P. children of the same minority-language group.

Reaction was immediate and overwhelmingly negative from educators' organizations, with support coming only from the N.E.A. and the National Association for Bilingual Education. The Education Department received an unprecedented 4,600 public comments, most in opposition, and the Congress voted to block the rules from taking effect before mid-1981.

In an effort to defend the regulations, Education Secretary Shirley Hufstedler sent representatives of her Title VII office to appear at hearings around the country. But the effect, says Mr. Stein, the education historian, was to strengthen "the popular misconception that the new regulations and the Title VII program were one and the same."

"The opposition made the most of it and was able to weaken both the grant-giving and enforcement aspects of bilingual education," he says.

O.C.R. Retreats

Calling the regulations "harsh, inflexible, burdensome, unworkable, and incredibly costly," Mr. Bell, President Reagan's new Secretary of Education, withdrew the rules on Feb. 2, 1981. The same official who had issued the *Lau* remedies six years earlier, Mr. Bell criticized the idea of mandating native-language instruction as "an intrusion on state and local responsibility."

> Where children have limited-English skills, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency.
>
> — J. Stanley Pottinger, 1970 Memorandum

"We will protect the rights of children who do not speak English well," Mr. Bell said, "but we will do so by permitting school districts to use any way that has proven to be successful."

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The O.C.R., while attempting to define standards that would ensure LEP children's needs were addressed, worked to develop new regulations that would give districts more flexibility. Soon, however, it encountered opposition from within.

Daniel Oliver, the Education Department's new general counsel, expressed "doubts concerning the current validity of [the] *Lau*" decision. In line with the Reagan Administration's philosophy of civil-rights enforcement, Mr. Oliver argued that the O.C.R. should have to prove "discriminatory intent," rather than merely "discriminatory effects," to find a district in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

A district's failure to provide any special services to LEP children would clearly violate the law, Mr. Oliver said. But "a school district which implements reasonably a program based upon a theory deemed sound by experts [would] demonstrate a lack of discriminatory purpose," unless the O.C.R. could prove otherwise. A consensus on what regulations to propose was never reached, however, and in late 1982 the idea of issuing new *Lau* rules was abandoned.

Enforcement activity, meanwhile, fell off sharply. The *Lau* remedies were no longer applied. "Districts have been left free to pursue any approach based on informed educational judgment," the O.C.R.'s director, Harry M. Singleton, wrote in a June 29, 1982, memorandum to Secretary Bell.

According to enforcement data compiled by the civil-rights office in 1986, districts were nine times less likely to be monitored for *Lau* violations under the Reagan Administration than under the Ford and Carter administrations. The O.C.R. continued to find violations in nearly 60 percent of its compliance reviews, but follow-up visits were rare.

Effectiveness Controversy

Title VII, meanwhile, came under increasing fire after the *Lau* regulations were withdrawn. Soon after taking office, President Reagan declared that it was "absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual-education program that is now openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving native language and never getting adequate in English."

In the fall of 1981, an Education Department review of bilingual-education research concluded that "the case for the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education is so weak" that districts should be encouraged to experiment with alternative methods.

Pressure to drop Title VII's native-language requirement intensified among those who sought funding for programs using E.S.L.-only approaches or "structured immersion" in English.

Fairfax County, Va., a large district in suburban Washington with LEP students from 50 different language groups, was often cited as an example of the impracticality of bilingual education.

In December 1980, Fairfax officials won a four-year battle with the O.C.R. for approval of a *Lau* plan that featured E.S.L. without bilingual instruction. Federal authorities conceded that children were learning in the well-financed program, where teacher-student ratios averaged 12-1 and the district was spending $750 per LEP child in addition to a per-pupil expenditure of $2,696, which was well above the national average.

Esther J. Eisenhower, the district's E.S.L. director, was not an opponent of bilingual education. But she became a leading advocate for giving school officials the discretion and funding "to teach LEP children in the methodologies that they deem best for their students' particular needs."

Testifying before a Senate subcommittee in 1982, Ms. Eisenhower said, "I cannot deny that instruction in the native language—when it is available, when there is the proper curriculum, when there are the best trained teachers—is the best method to teach the children. But sometimes we look at the labels and forget that the main ingredient for education is how a program is implemented."

At the same time, a growing movement led by Senator S. I. Hayakawa, a Republican from California, opposed bilingual instruction less for educational reasons than for ideological ones, insisting that native-language instruction discouraged immigrants from joining the American mainstream.

Representative James Sheuer, one of the original sponsors of the Bilingual Education Act, said the law's "original purposes [had been] perverted and politicized." He said the program had been intended to provide "a pressure-cooker experience in English. [But instead], English has been sort of thinned out and in many cases vanished into the mists."

1984 Amendments

With the act up for reauthorization in 1983, opponents were optimistic that they could get the law changed or block an extension of the program. But the Congress postponed the battle by moving Title VII's expiration date up to the fall of 1984.

Meanwhile, as the Republicans developed new strategies to court the Hispanic vote that year, the President offered words of praise for "effective bilingual programs," and a White House aide described Mr. Reagan's "growing sensitivity on the issue."

Two House Democrats, Dale Kildee of Michigan and Balthazar Corrada of Puerto Rico, introduced legislation reauthorizing the program, drafted by the National Association for Bilingual Education. To the surprise of most observers, the bill moved quickly, largely the result of a compromise worked out with two Republicans representatives, John McCain of Arizona and Steve Bartlett of Texas.

Under the compromise, 4 percent of Title VII funds were authorized for "special alternative instructional programs"—those using no native language. If total appropriations exceeded $140 million, half of the excess would go to the alternative programs, up to 10 percent of total grant awards.

The Reagan Administration has cut Title VII funding from a high of $167 million in 1980 to $133 million in fiscal 1986. For the current fiscal year, the Congress has appropriated $143 million, and grants for English-only programs remain capped at 4 percent.

The 1984 amendments also authorized grant programs for "family English literacy," aimed at parents of children in Title VII programs, and for "developmental bilingual education," or language-maintenance programs.

Soon after his confirmation as Secretary of Education in 1985, William J. Bennett unveiled a "bilingual-education initiative," igniting yet another round of national debate.

Noting high dropout rates among Hispanic students, the Secretary suggested that bilingual education had failed. Federal policy, he said, had "lost sight of the goal of learning English as the key to equal educational opportunity"; instead, native-language instruction had become "an emblem of cultural pride."

Mr. Bennett also said Title VII's requirement for native-language instruction reflected "a foolish conviction that only Washington knew best . . . that local school districts . . . could not be trusted to teach their students English."

His initiative had three parts. First, the Education Department issued new regulations for bilingual-education grants, which gave preference to programs that move children as quickly as possible from native-language instruction to mainstream classes.

Also, it informed the 498 districts that had adopted bilingual education as part of *Lau* plans that they were free to renegotiate the agreements with the O.C.R. But six months later, only 3 percent of these districts had responded, some to say that they planned to expand bilingual programs.

Finally, the Administration, citing "the inconclusiveness of research," proposed legislation to remove all restrictions on Title VII funding for English-only approaches.

Bilingual-education advocates reacted angrily to Mr. Bennett's attempt to undo the bipartisan compromise on the issue reached a year earlier. They predicted that, without restrictions, the Education Department would redirect much of Title VII aid to experimental programs simply because they posed an alternative to bilingual education.

"If this program were fully funded, it wouldn't make much difference," said James J. Lyons, legislative counsel to the National Association for Bilingual Education. "But when you're funding only one-third of those who apply, it's outrageous."

The Reagan Administration is hypocritical, he added, to attack Title VII's native-language requirement, while seeking to eliminate the Emergency Immigrant Assistance program, which largely supports English-as-a-second-language instruction.

Raul Yzaguirre, president of the National Council of La Raza, compared Mr. Bennett's criticism of "federal intrusiveness" to segregationists' invocation of "states' rights," accusing him of stirring up "xenophobic fears" toward language minorities.

"How can a small, voluntary, competitive grant program—in which more school agencies apply than can be funded—be heavy-handed?" Mr. Yzaguirre asked.

The Congress took no action on the Administration's bill last year. But aides to Secretary Bennett have expressed optimism about the legislation's prospects this year. Title VII must be reauthorized in the 100th Congress, and if the department can get an up-or-down vote on its proposal, it has a good chance of passage, according to former Undersecretary of Education Gary L. Bauer.

"Our intention is neither to promote one instructional method at the expense of another, nor to belittle or diminish any culture or heritage," Secretary Bennett has said. "If a district decides that native-language instruction is the best way to help its students learn English, then that district ought to be able to receive federal support."

He adds, however, that "we must be clear as to the goal of the federal bilingual-education program—the rapid acquisition of fluency in English."

Basic Questions Spur Controversy

How many language-minority children in the United States are limited-English-proficient? How adequate a job are the schools doing in serving these students' special needs?

As with most issues in bilingual education, considerable controversy swirls around these questions.

Last year, in his report to the Congress on "The Condition of Bilingual Education in the United States," Secretary of Education William J. Bennett estimated that there were 1.2 million to 1.7 million LEP children of school age, based on an analysis of 1980 Census figures.

Ninety-four percent of the students who needed special language services were receiving them, he added.

Mr. Bennett's figures represented a significant reduction in the department's previous estimate of 2.4 million to 3.6 million LEP children, ages 5 to 14, based on 1978 data. It also reflected a narrower definition of limited-English proficiency—one which, according to the Secretary, gave a truer picture of the number of students who really need help.

Bilingual-education advocates criticized the department for arbitrarily excluding from its count many children who would be eligible for Title VII services under the law.

The Congress deliberately left the definition broad—not requiring native-language proficiency for students classified as limited in English—argued Daniel M. Ulibarri, former director of the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. "What is relevant," he said, "is whether a child is likely to [have], or is having, academic difficulties that are language-background related."

Dorothy Waggoner, a consultant who specializes in language-minority statistics, charged that the department's figures "underestimate needs and overstate the extent of services" to LEP children.

Ms. Waggoner said that a more accurate estimate, based on the 1980 data, is 3.5 million to 5.3 million such students, representing the range of language-minority children who scored, respectively, below the 20th percentile and below the 40th percentile in English proficiency.

Using the same Census data, the department pared its estimate of LEP students by excluding children above the 19th percentile and by applying a series of external criteria. Such factors, which were not mentioned in the Bilingual Education Act, included the language the child spoke at home and with peers, the language of the head of household, and whether a child was foreign-born.

Mr. Bennett's estimate that 94 percent of LEP children were being served—in bilingual classrooms or in English-as-a-second language programs, among other ways—was derived from a survey of school districts conducted in 1983-84 by Development Associates under contract with the department. The study noted, however, that "districts may tend to define and report LEP students in terms of services provided rather than in terms of external criteria of need."

A New York City study conducted by the Educational Priorities Panel, a citizens' advocacy group, concluded that 44,000 of the city's 110,000 LEP students were not receiving language services.

According to the Education Department's previous figures of 2.4 million to 3.6 million LEP students, the Development Associates' estimate of 790,000 students served would indicate that only 22 percent to 33 percent of LEP children are getting help, Ms. Waggoner contended.

Using the same assumptions, calculations indicate that federal Title VII grants support programs for 5 percent to 8 percent of the LEP population.

Critics of the department's new figures also argue that the data omit large numbers of LEP children who have immigrated to the United States since 1980. In California, for instance, the state estimates that the number of LEP children jumped from 326,000 in 1980 to 567,000 in 1986—a 73 percent increase.

California Vote Gives Boost To 'English-Only' Movement

When Californians voted by a 3-to-1 margin last fall to declare English the state's official language, evidence suggests they did not intend to strike a blow against bilingual education. But that now appears to be the political effect.

As legislators prepare to vote this year on whether to extend the state's bilingual-education law, its supporters express pessimism about their chances of keeping the program intact, citing the fallout from Proposition 63.

In a national context, the measure's approval has been a boon to the "English-only" movement, the best organized opposition that bilingual education has yet faced. This year, 31 states are considering official-language laws. Seven states had passed such measures before California, and in February, in a unanimous vote by the legislature, Arkansas became the ninth.

Legally, these statutes and constitutional amendments may have no direct effect on bilingual programs. But voter enthusiasm for such measures—as well as the letter-writing campaigns that the issue has generated, usually featuring attacks on native-language instruction—has not gone unnoticed by politicians.

Coordinating much of this activity is U.S. English, an advocacy group founded in 1983 by S. I. Hayakawa, a former U.S. Senator from California, to promote an official-language amendment to the U.S. Constitution. From a tiny lobbying group, U.S. English has mushroomed into a nearly $7-million-a-year operation with 275,000 dues-paying members across the country.

The group's main premise is that bilingualism poses a growing "threat to English" as the unifying force in American society. It warns that the nation is being "divided along language lines," as ethnic minorities, particularly Hispanics, insist on retaining their native languages and cultures instead of joining the English-speaking mainstream.

While limited amounts of native-language instruction may do no harm, the group says, prolonged bilingual education not only discourages children from learning English, but also "sends them a message" that they have no obligation to do so.

Powerful Appeal

This argument has found a receptive ear among many Americans, particularly in areas where a backlash is growing against ethnic minorities and the government's provision of special language programs.

In 1985, U.S. English generated the bulk of comments supporting the U.S. Education Department's proposed regulations on bilingual education. Along with arguments that immigrant children should be taught English more quickly, for their own benefit, many letters expressed racial fears and animosity. *(See Education Week, March 19, 1986.)*

Hispanic leaders and public officials, including Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, have denounced the English-only movement as divisive, exclusionary, and racist. They opposed California's English-language amendment as a threat to the civil rights of language minorities.

Gerda Bikales, executive director of U.S. English, calls the charges "a very vicious series of attacks against those who would oppose the mindless drift toward a bilingual society in the United States."

How could 73 percent of California voters be racist? she asks, noting that 54 percent of Hispanics favored Proposition 63 in pre-election polls. Surveys by the *Los Angeles Times* also showed that few voters were aware that the ballot initiative could curtail most foreign-language services now offered by the state and its municipalities.

Geoffrey Nunberg, a professor of semantics at Stanford University, says the approval of Proposition 63 will make it "harder for immigrants who have not yet mastered English to enter the social and economic mainstream," while doing nothing to help them learn English.

"The fact is that immigrants are desperate to learn English," he says, noting that last year, in Los Angeles County alone, 50,000 adults were turned away from English-as-a-second-language programs.

Drafters of the U.S. Constitution rejected official-language provisions, Mr. Nunberg argues, "precisely because they believed citizens would agree on language standards out of their own free will. English has become the most spectacularly successful language in the world—without state interference."

"People are often willing to learn a second language, nowhere more so than in America," he adds, "because they perceive social and economic advantages to doing so. Language conflicts arise precisely where one group tries to impose its language on another by force of law."

'Hidden Agenda'

Joshua Fishman, a professor of psychology at Yeshiva University, questions the sudden concern for the "functional protection of English." How, he asks, is English endangered in a country where it is spoken by 97 percent of the population; where "linguistic minorities overwhelmingly lose their mother tongues by the second or, at most, the third generation"; and where "no ethnic political parties or separatist movements exist"?

Mr. Fishman maintains that U.S. English and like-minded groups have "a hidden agenda" of equating cultural differences with disloyalty, of seeking scapegoats for social ills that have little to do with language, such as terrorism abroad and economic dislocations at home.

"The English-only movement," he argues, "is a displacement of middle-class fears and anxieties from difficult, perhaps even intractable, real problems in American society, to mythical, simplistic, and stereotypic problems."

It is, he concludes, "another 'liberation of Grenada' relative to the real causes of unrest in the world."

Ms. Bikales argues, however, that minorities' unwillingness to learn English is a very real problem that fosters social disunity. "Government should not stand idly by and let the core culture, the shared culture formed by generations of earlier immigrants, slip away," she says. "The government should not allow its own citizens to feel like strangers in their own land. If anyone has to feel strange, it's got to be the immigrant, until he learns the language."

With the availability of bilingual education and other native-language services, Ms. Bikales charges, language minorities no longer feel bound by the "unwritten pact that generations of immigrants have lived by: 'In return for freedom and opportunity, one learns English.' "

Administration View

The Reagan Administration has declined to take a position on the proposed English-language amendment to the Constitution. Although a handful of conservative congressmen have been promoting the measure since 1981, it has received little support in the Congress.

The growing "English-only" movement is considered by many to represent the best organized opposition that bilingual education has yet faced.

Senator Steve Symms, the Republican from Idaho who is the amendment's prime sponsor, recently said he does not expect the measure to be approved in the near future. He conceded, though, that his goal in pushing for the amendment is to outlaw bilingual education: "We owe it to those people who immigrate into the United States to immerse them in English, to help them become proficient in the language, so they, too, can participate in the great American dream."

Secretary of Education William J. Bennett has maintained the Administration's position of neutrality on the issue. But the Education Department recently hired Senator Symms's principal aide on the issue, R. E. "Rusty" Butler, as a special assistant on post-secondary education. In a 1984 monograph, Mr. Butler warned that "bilingual education has national-security implications" and linked it to Hispanic "separatism" and the potential for "terrorism in the U.S."

Carol Pendas Whitten, director of the office of bilingual education and minority languages affairs, has met frequently with officials of U.S. English to discuss their views on how to educate limited-English-proficient children.

Last fall, she hired one of the group's consultants, Gary R. Imhoff, to conduct a study "to ensure the objectivity and accuracy" of materials used in bilingual-bicultural teacher-training programs receiving federal funds.

'English Plus'

To counter the growing influence of the "English-only" movement, in late 1985 the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Miami-based Spanish American League Against Discrimination launched a campaign known as "English Plus."

There is no question that English is the nation's common language, says Osvaldo Soto, president of SALAD, and the groups favor every effort to help LEP children become proficient in it.

"But English is not enough," he says. "We don't want a monolingual society. This country was founded on a diversity of language and culture, and we want to preserve that diversity."

The English Plus campaign has concentrated on urging states and municipalities to declare themselves officially multilingual and multicultural. Such measures have passed in Atlanta, Tucson, Ariz., and Osceola County, Fla., and are pending in Arizona and New York State.

But the English Plus groups played only a limited role in opposing California's Proposition 63. Some Hispanic organizations, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, campaigned actively against the measure, but it was the American Civil Liberties Union that took the lead. In addition, many politicians opposed Proposition 63, calling it an insult to minorities.

Bilingual Education: The Research Debate

Officials, Educators Reach No Consensus on Research

Bilingual teaching methods, initiated 20 years ago with more good intentions than good pedagogy, today are grounded in linguistics and cognitive psychology. Practitioners can increasingly point to programs in which children are doing well—both in English and in other subjects.

No longer forced to "sink or swim," students in bilingual classrooms are not penalized for their limited English skills, bilingual educators say. No longer do such students inevitably fall behind, rarely to catch up with classmates. No longer are they stigmatized as slow learners because the teacher speaks another language.

By the time limited-English-proficient children leave well-designed bilingual programs, educators say, a majority are usually achieving at or near grade level, even in inner-city schools where failure was once the norm.

And yet, while research has documented some dramatic successes, even bilingual-education advocates acknowledge that the number of well-designed studies of such programs is not large. As a result, a consensus on what the research actually says about bilingual education—and how that information should be translated into policy—remains elusive.

Does It Really Work?

Notwithstanding the advances of the past decade, the terms of the policy debate have remained virtually unchanged. Skeptics still question whether native-language instruction works. Whether children are learning English or languishing in academic ghettos. Whether some students benefit, but not others. Whether school districts should have more flexibility to try experimental alternatives. And whether enhancing ethnic pride taken precedence over assimilating language-minority children into the American mainstream.

Leading these skeptics is Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, who says that "researchers are today no more certain of the best method of teaching English than they were 20 years ago."

"Where research does not dictate one method," he adds, "the federal government should not dictate, either."

Mr. Bennett characterizes as "a failed path" the current requirement that, to qualify for federal aid under Title VII, schools must provide some instruction in children's native language.

"The research shows," the Secretary asserts, "that other methods of instruction . . . are often equally as effective as transitional bilingual education." He has urged the Congress to authorize unrestricted funding for such alternatives as English as a second language and "structured immersion" in English.

Secretary Bennett acknowledges that some bilingual programs work well, but he often attributes their success to non-linguistic factors: "These schools concentrate on the basics—the basics of good behavior and the basics of academic achievement."

"We are method-blind," he says. "School districts should be allowed and encouraged to use the method of instruction that they think will work best."

At other times, Mr. Bennett and various Education Department officials have suggested that native-language instruction can be detrimental to children. "Past federal policy has discouraged the use of English and may consequently delay development of English-language skills," said a department fact sheet released in fall 1985, when the Secretary launched his "bilingual-education initiative."

Advocates of bilingual education respond that the Education Department has systematically ignored or distorted numerous studies showing the success of bilingual programs. Jose A. Cardenas, a pioneer in the field, accuses Mr. Bennett of spreading "the Big Lie" that bilingual education has failed because it has not reversed high dropout rates among Hispanic students.

"There are no data to suggest the success of the structured-immersion approach," Mr. Cardenas says. "Though the replacement of bilingual programs by immersion programs has long been an [objective] of the Reagan Administration, scholars have never taken this recommendation seriously, due to the absence of a single study showing this method" is effective for LEP students in the United States.

The stakes of the research controversy are high. Secretary Bennett insists he has no intention of dismantling the program, citing his proposal to "level-fund" Title VII at $143 million next year in a budget that would cut most other federal aid to education.

But bilingual educators express fears that, under his policy of "greater flexibility" for school districts, Mr. Bennett plans to redirect most grants to support what they consider unproven English-only approaches.

Differing Objectives

The pedagogical debate has been influenced—many would say distorted—by broader political struggles over bilingualism in American society.

For some critics, the educational issues are largely irrelevant. Advocacy groups such as U.S. English argue that bilingual instruction—indeed, any public services in languages other than English—can postpone the assimilation of new immigrants and promote social and political divisiveness.

But even the educational strands of the debate are difficult to untangle. The two sides approach the issues with fundamentally different questions, different uses of research evidence, and different studies to support their views.

For the Education Department, the principal question about programs for LEP children is how quickly and effectively they teach English, thus enabling the students to enter mainstream classrooms.

When the department proposed new regulations for Title VII grants in November 1985, it called for native-language instruction "only to the extent necessary" to teach English. The proposal did not mention the program's second statutory objective: to help children "meet grade-promotion and graduation standards."

By contrast, most researchers and practi-

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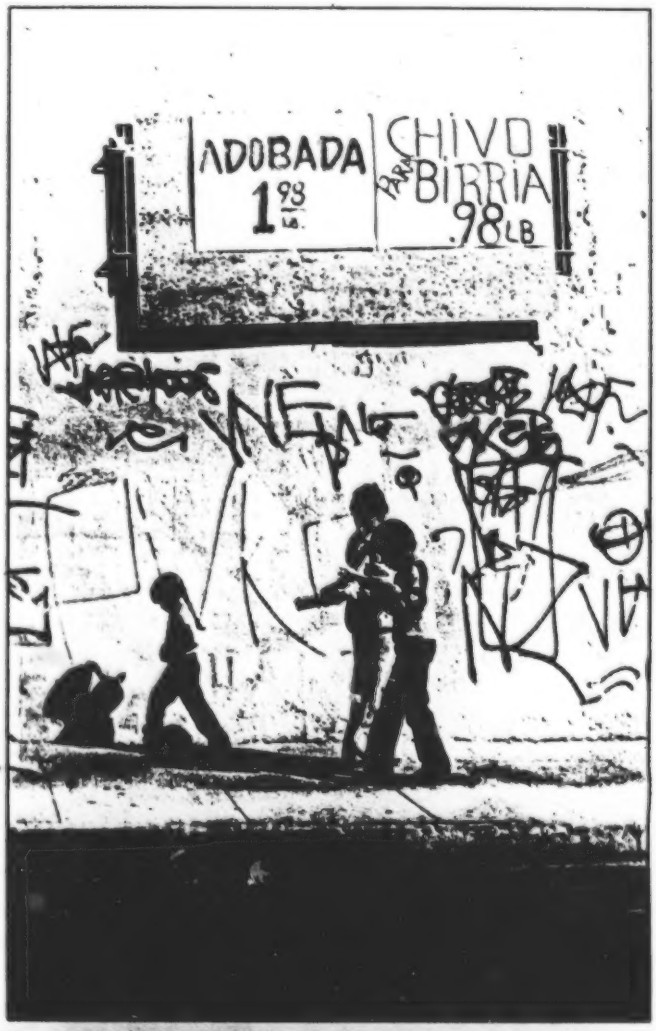

While research has documented some dramatic successes, even bilingual-education advocates acknowledge that the number of well-designed studies of such programs is not large. As a result, researchers and educators have not been able to reach a consensus on what the research on bilingual education actually says and on how it should be translated into policy.

The educational strands of the research debate are difficult to untangle. The two sides approach the issues with fundamentally different questions, different uses of research evidence, and of course, different studies to support their views.

Agreement on Bilingual-Research Findings Remains Elusive

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tioners in the field judge programs on how they promote all-around cognitive development. For these educators, the speed of English acquisition matters less than its quality—whether children have a solid linguistic foundation for school success. And research indicates that "cognitive-academic language proficiency" takes children longer to develop than conversational English skills.

"The only thing that counts in education is the long term," says Stephen D. Krashen, a leading theorist of second-language acquisition. "We're not interested in what kids do at the end of the 1st grade. We're interested in their long-term chances of success."

Pragmatists vs. Theorists

Secretary Bennett and other skeptics about the benefits of bilingual education advance a pragmatic line of argument, insisting that "the method" must be judged by its results in practice.

Therefore, they put their emphasis on program evaluations that compare transitional bilingual education with English-only approaches, focusing in particular on student scores in English reading and language arts. They rely on "reviews of the literature" that collect studies, discard those deemed scientifically unsound, and essentially "count the votes" for or against bilingual education.

Kenji Hakuta, a Yale University psychologist, draws a distinction between this type of "evaluation research" and "basic research" in the field.

He argues that "evaluation studies are doing a poor job of measuring" the benefits of bilingual education for a variety of reasons: program diversity, inherent "conceptual and technical problems" in designing evaluations, and sloppy research practices. For example, he says, some studies have biased outcomes by including "graduates" of bilingual education in English-only comparison groups.

On the other hand, Mr. Hakuta says, basic research has not only established the validity of bilingual approaches, but also has provided assistance to educators in perfecting curriculum and methodology.

While program evaluations have provided a rich source of empirical evidence for basic research, he and others note, the data are used in a fundamentally different way than in evaluation research.

Instead of quantifying overall results, basic research focuses on theoretical questions about why LEP children succeed or fail in school. It uses empirical data to confirm or reject hypotheses that explain how a second language is acquired; how the process is affected by such factors as age, minority social status, and native-language skills; and how linguistic development interacts with cognitive development.

Rather than waiting for the perfect evaluation study, Mr. Hakuta argues, federal policy should heed the findings of basic research, which point, he says, to the superiority of approaches that build on LEP children's native-language skills.

But, thus far, Education Department officials have seldom strayed from the terrain of evaluation studies, where evidence for the effectiveness of bilingual education has been more ambiguous.

They have relied heavily on reviews of literature in the field, beginning in the late 1970's, that have concluded there are no significant differences in LEP student achievement between bilingual programs and other approaches, including "submersion" in English.

Of these reviews, the most significant and extensive was conducted in 1981 by two Education Department researchers, Keith A. Baker and Adriana A. de Kanter. The authors examined more than 300 studies, but disqualified 90 percent of them for methodological flaws.

After analyzing those that remained, the researchers concluded: "The case for the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education is so weak that exclusive reliance on this instructional method is clearly not justified. Too little is known about the problems of educating language minorities to prescribe a specific remedy at the federal level. . . . Each school district should decide what type of special program is most appropriate for its own unique setting."

Most independent reviews of the literature have reached similar conclusions. One significant exception—a statistical re-examination of the Baker-de Kanter study by Ann C. Willig, an educational psychologist now at the University of Texas, casts significant doubts on the 1981 review's findings.

'Burden of Proof'

The Education Department's official agnosticism on the effectiveness of bilingual education was summed up recently by Chester E. Finn Jr., assistant secretary for educational research and improvement.

"The logical test underlying scientific research is the question of rejection of the null hypothesis," Mr. Finn writes. "That is to say, the burden of proof rests on those who assert that some effect or event occurs."

"Thus," he reasons, "it is not incumbent on the Department of Education to prove that transitional bilingual education is ineffective. Rather, the burden of proof is on those who assert that such education *is* effective. When results are inconclusive, the correct scientific conclusion is to accept the null hypothesis, i.e., to conclude that those who assert effectiveness have failed to prove their claims."

Supporters of bilingual education respond that empirical proof of universal effectiveness—with every child, from every background, in every school—is a standard that few other educational disciplines are asked to meet.

"The level of evidence demanded is extraordinary," says Mr. Krashen, a professor of linguistics at the University of Southern California. "It's hard to do the perfect experiment," he adds, conceding that "some of the study designs have been awful."

"But the results are very consistent over hundreds of studies," he says, favoring the hypothesis that "bilingual education works."

Basic Research

For the most part, the hypotheses advanced by Mr. Krashen and other basic researchers are more specific. Mr. Hakuta summarizes several that have relevance for federal policy on bilingual education:

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• The "sense of urgency in introducing English to non-English-speaking children and concern about postponing children's exit from bilingual programs" are misplaced, he notes, because early childhood is not the optimum age to pick up a second language. While this process—at any age—"is likely to be very slow, teen-agers and adults are much more efficient learners than elementary-school children, and 4th to 7th graders are faster than 1st to 3rd graders."

• "Language is not a unified skill, but a complex configuration of abilities. . . . Language used for conversational purposes is quite different from language used for school learning, and the former develops earlier than the latter."

• Because of the transferability of linguistic skills, "time spent learning in the native language . . . is not time lost in developing English." In fact, over the long term, a child with a strong foundation in his first language will perform better in English.

• Research on literacy indicates that "reading should be taught in the native language, particularly for children who, on other grounds, run the risk of reading failure. Reading skills acquired in the native language will transfer readily and quickly to English, and will result in higher ultimate reading achievement in English."

• "There is no cognitive cost in the development of bilingualism in children. Very possibly, bilingualism enhances children's thinking skills."

Mr. Krashen notes that none of these research findings has been "proven" in any final sense. "All scientific hypotheses are fragile," he says. One bit of contradictory evidence can destroy them. But we owe it to the kids to use [bilingual instruction] because it's our best guess as to what works best. I can't imagine any other way."

A Glossary of Bilingual-Education Terms

An excess of oversimplified and often misleading program labels complicates the debate over the effectiveness of bilingual education.

For example, transitional bilingual education, English as a second language, and immersion are typically described as discrete "methods" of teaching limited-English-proficient children. In practice, however, there is much overlap among the three educational treatments—indeed, some of the most successful bilingual models draw techniques from all three. At the same time, there is enormous variation among programs classed under each of these labels.

To follow the pedagogical debate, a clear understanding of terms is essential. The following glossary is drawn principally from Bilingual and E.S.L. Classrooms, *a leading text used in bilingual-teacher training, by Carlos J. Ovando and Virginia P. Collier.*

In **transitional bilingual education**, LEP children study English in classes specially designed for second-language learners and receive a portion of their instruction in their native language to help them keep up in school subjects. The goal is to prepare students to enter mainstream English classrooms as soon as possible, and this transition is usually completed within two years.

By law, the bulk of federal Title VII grants must support the transitional approach. But the legal definition of transitional bilingual education is broad, requiring only that some native language and culture be used, along with E.S.L. instruction.

Contrary to the public perception of transitional bilingual education as a foreign-language program, studies have shown that English is the medium of instruction from 72 percent to 92 percent of the time. In a recent California study, teachers used no native language at all in 47 percent of the so-called "bilingual classrooms" observed.

Unlike transitional programs, **maintenance or developmental bilingual education** attempts to preserve and develop the students' first language while they are adding a second. In other words, maintenance programs are based on an educational **enrichment** model; transitional programs, on a **compensatory** model. "In the maintenance model, there is less emphasis on exiting students from the program as soon as possible," according to Mr. Ovando and Ms. Collier. Typically, native-language classes continue through the 6th grade, although most subjects may be taught in English. Developmental bilingual classrooms at the high-school level are relatively rare in the United States.

The goal of language maintenance is **additive bilingualism**, which provides cognitive, as well as social and economic advantages, according to some researchers. By contrast, **subtractive bilingualism**—the attempt to replace a child's native language with English—is associated by many researchers with low levels of development in both languages, and with underachievement in school.

Maintenance programs may also function as **two-way bilingual education**, which Mr. Ovando and Ms. Collier define as "an integrated model in which speakers of [two] languages are placed together in a bilingual classroom to learn each other's language and work academically in both languages." Most common in the United States are programs that simultaneously teach Spanish to English-background children and English to Hispanics, while developing native-language skills for both groups.

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In **immersion** programs, children are taught a second language through content-area instruction in that language, with an emphasis on contextual clues and with grammar and vocabulary adjusted to students' level of proficiency. The key is providing **comprehensible input**, or understandable messages through which children acquire the second language as they learn other academic subjects.

Immersion must be distinguished from **submersion**, also known as "sink or swim," in which LEP children receive no special language assistance. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1974, in the *Lau* v. *Nichols* case, that submersion violates federal civil-rights law.

Enrichment-immersion programs have been widely successful among language-majority children, such as French immersion in Canada, or Spanish immersion in the United States, in which English-speakers are taught initially in the second language.

The U.S. Education Department has promoted an approach known as **structured immersion**, a monolingual English strategy for teaching language-minority children. This method differs from submersion, because a simplified form of English is used as the medium of instruction, and in some immersion models, teachers are capable of answering—in English—questions posed by children in their native tongue.

Lacking substantial evidence from the United States, proponents have cited the success of French immersion programs in Canada in arguing that structured immersion is a promising alternative to bilingual education. But the researchers who designed French immersion have warned that this approach is inappropriate and potentially harmful for minority students, whose native tongue is in danger of being replaced because of its low social status.

Alternate immersion, also termed **sheltered English**, is a component of many bilingual programs. Children receive sheltered instruction—geared to their level of English proficiency—sometimes at first in subjects that are less language-intensive, such as mathematics, and later in subjects that are more so, such as social studies.

In other program models, lessons are taught in the native language in the morning and through English immersion in the afternoon, or the lessons may be repeated on alternate days. The **preview-review method**, frequently used in a team-teaching situation, features lessons taught first in one, then the other, language, followed by a review session in both languages to reinforce what has been learned.

Concurrent translation, in which a teacher shifts between two languages to communicate each idea, is still the predominant method of bilingual instruction in the United States. Many researchers, however, arguing that children simply ignore the language they do not understand, have criticized this approach. Also, they warn, teachers tend to favor one language or the other, often unconsciously.

Worst of all, the concurrent-translation method can encourage a regressive form of **code-switching**—or a mixing of the two languages—which can retard children's development in both.

Other concurrent approaches attempt to avoid these problems by training teachers, among other things, to monitor their language use and to avoid code-switching within sentences. With such adjustments, the approach could work, says Stephen D. Krashen, a leading theorist of second-language acquisition. "But the concurrent approach is tough on the teacher; it's unnecessary, and [sheltered English] is a safer way of doing it," he says.

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English as a second language is a component of virtually all bilingual-education programs in the United States. And because of a shortage of bilingual teachers, for many LEP children it is the only special assistance available. Especially in districts where many language groups are represented, students may receive E.S.L. instruction only through "pullout classes" a few times each week. The rest of the time, it is sink or swim.

With E.S.L., as with bilingual instruction, methods vary tremendously. The most common approaches remain **grammar-based**, such as the **audio-lingual method**, which emphasizes memorization of vocabulary and drills in "the structure of the week." The **grammar-translation approach**, an older, less-used method, concentrates on learning a language by perfecting reading and writing skills, with less attention to listening and speaking.

While grammar-based E.S.L. has produced students who can formulate grammatically perfect sentences—given enough time—it has often failed to make them proficient communicators, according to many researchers. And the tedious content of instruction, for students and teachers alike, appears to impede learning.

Increasingly, **communication-based E.S.L.** is superseding the old methods. The new approaches are grounded in the theory that language proficiency is acquired through exposure to comprehensible messages, rather than learned consciously through the study of syntax and vocabulary.

Representative of such innovative methods, **the natural approach** and **total physical response** stress simplified speech and visual or physical clues to help students comprehend second-language input. Also, they aim to create low-anxiety environments that "lower the **affective filter**" that prevents comprehensible input from getting through. For example, teachers focus on meaningful and interesting communication, resist the impulse to correct students' errors overtly, and avoid pressuring children to "produce" speech in the second language before they are ready.

Language-Acquisition Theory Revolutionizing Instruction

Virtually every American who has studied a foreign language in school, and who has later tried to use it among native speakers, can testify to the difficulty of becoming bilingual.

After years of instruction, reading and writing skills may be adequate in the second language. But attempts at oral communication are likely to be a challenge, demanding the recall of once-learned rules and meanings. And the reply, assuming there is a patient listener, can be perplexing.

Lucky for most Americans, an increasing number of foreigners speak English. By some estimates, English is now spoken by one billion people, nearly one-quarter of the world's population.

In the United States, fluency in any other language is optional. But language minorities in this country have no choice; the ability to communicate in English is essential to [illegible]

New waves of immigration since the late 1970's, particularly from Asia and Central America, have put a special burden on the schools to provide quality English-as-a-second-language instruction, especially for children who receive little exposure to English outside the classroom.

But traditional methods of E.S.L., with their stress on memorization of grammar and vocabulary, have been spectacularly unsuccessful, according to a growing number of educators. Modeled on foreign-language teaching, such approaches train students to compose grammatically correct sentences, but prepare them poorly to communicate in English.

On the other hand, research has shown that classrooms that develop children's skills in their native language often score higher in English than their counterparts in E.S.L.-only or English-immersion programs.

This finding is hard to accept at face value. How could native-language instruction promote English acquisition? Why doesn't intensive study of a language lead to fluency?

To explain these and similar paradoxes, a theory of second-language acquisition has developed over the past 15 years that has revolutionized the practice of both E.S.L. and bilingual education.

Learning vs. Acquiring

Language fluency cannot be *learned*, says Stephen D. Krashen, one of the theory's leading exponents. That is, conscious mastery of grammar and vocabulary—while serving an editing function in speech or writing—is an insufficient basis for effective communication.

Instead, such proficiency must be *acquired*, Mr. Krashen argues, and this happens, he says, "in one fundamental way: We acquire language when we understand it."

"What is spectacular about this idea," he explains, "is that it happens incidentally, involuntarily, subconsciously, and effortlessly."

Language acquisition, in Mr. Krashen's theory, requires "comprehensible input"—ideally, second-language messages that make sense, but that are just beyond the listener's level of proficiency. Not only vocabulary, but grammatical rules are "picked up" in this way, he says, through understanding the messages in which they are embedded.

What counts is the quality of second-language exposure, not the quantity. A limited-English-proficient child placed in a "sink or swim" classroom primarily hears noise. With contextual clues—such as having a lesson first taught in the native language—English input becomes more comprehensible.

> What is spectacular about this idea is that it happens incidentally, involuntarily, subconsciously, and effortlessly.
>
> — Stephen D. Krashen, professor

Mr. Krashen adds that "speaking per se does not cause language acquisition," but is a result of it, "a result of obtaining comprehensible input."

This corollary of the "input hypothesis" explains why LEP children typically go through a "silent period," and then suddenly begin speaking in English. "When they begin to speak," he says, "they are not beginning their acquisition; they are showing off their competence."

On the other hand, Mr. Krashen maintains, attempts to teach language through memorization and mimickry, through what he terms mindless exercises that illustrate the "structure of the week," are futile for several reasons.

First, there is no complete set of rules for what native speakers have internalized. Linguists, he says, "have described only a fraction" of the complex structure of any natural language, and most grammar textbooks are therefore woefully incomplete.

But even if a learner could achieve intellectual mastery of a new system—something that few educated adults can do, Mr. Krashen notes—and could successfully "focus on form" while using it to communicate, the process would work too slowly to be of use in conversation.

Language Organ

Mr. Krashen's theory draws on the linguist Noam Chomsky's hypothesis that a genetically determined "language-acquisition device" functions identically in all human beings. When this "mental organ" receives intelligible messages in a second language, Mr. Krashen argues, the brain has "no choice but to acquire that language, just as the visual system has no choice but to see, and the pancreas has no choice but to operate as pancreases do."

"The obvious implication," he says, "is that language teaching should be based on giving people messages they understand. For E.S.L. students, a well-taught geography lesson, if it's comprehensible, is a language lesson. In fact, it's better than an E.S.L. class, [where] we're always wondering what to talk about."

A methodology known as "sheltered English"—subject-matter lessons tailored to LEP students' level of English proficiency—is increasingly being incorporated into bilingual-education programs, with good results, Mr. Krashen says.

And communication-based E.S.L. techniques are also on the rise. The "natural approach," for example, teaches English through extensive use of physical and visual clues, minimal correction of grammatical errors, and an emphasis on communicating messages relevant to students' needs and interests.

Psychological Impediments

Unfortunately, however, psychological factors can, and usually do, interrupt the smooth functioning of the language-acquisition device, according to experts.

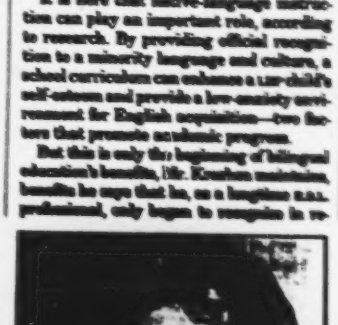
Mr. Krashen's theory groups these negative influences under the term "affective filter." They include anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and inadequate motivation to speak the second language—any or all of which can retard the language-acquisition process by keeping comprehensible input from getting through.

In this respect, young children appear to have an advantage over their elders in learning English. Before puberty, they tend to be less self-conscious about making errors in a new language.

But a lack of self-esteem, characteristic of poor children who come to school speaking a low-status language, can impede their English acquisition by "raising the affective filter," Mr. Krashen says.

It is here that native-language instruction can play an important role, according to research. By providing official recognition to a minority language and culture, a school curriculum can enhance a LEP child's self-esteem and provide a low-anxiety environment for English acquisition—two factors that promote academic progress.

But this is only the beginning of bilingual education's benefits, Mr. Krashen maintains, benefits he says that he, as a longtime E.S.L. professional, only began to recognize in recent years. In particular, he stresses, bilingual education has the potential "to make English input more comprehensible" for LEP children.



While evidence for this conclusion is growing, Mr. Krashen says, it remains controversial, because "this idea is counter-intuitive," not unlike other tenets of bilingual education.

The notion of "go East to get West"—study Spanish to learn English—appears, to many educators as well as laymen, to defy common sense. Mr. Krashen's conversion, he recalls, came about around 1980, during a discussion of Jim Cummins's work on native-language literacy.

Genesis of Theory

Mr. Cummins, a researcher at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, in the mid-1970's began formulating a critique of what he regarded as oversimplified notions on both sides of the bilingual-education debate.

First, Mr. Cummins says, there was the "intuitively appealing argument . . . that deficiencies in English should be remediated by intensive instruction in English." In other words, teaching LEP students in their native language was a costly waste of time.

Second, there was the strongest "common-sense" argument for bilingual instruction—in fact, the argument that has shaped federal legislation in the field—that children cannot learn in a language they do not understand.

Neither hypothesis could stand up to theoretical examination, Mr. Cummins concluded, and both were contradicted in practice by successful educational programs.

The "insufficient-exposure hypothesis"—still a mainstay of opposition to bilingual education,—was summed up by the late John Ashbrook, a Republican Congressman from Ohio: "When children come out of the Spanish-language schools or Chicano-language schools which call themselves bilingual," Mr. Ashbrook asked, "how is our educational system going to make them literate in what will still be a completely alien tongue?"

In a similar vein, Carol Pendon Whitten, director of the U.S. Education Department's office of bilingual education and minority languages affairs, has warned that prolonging native-language instruction "will hurt the child, because the child is kept out of the mainstream classroom and put in a remedial program."

Educational research strongly contradicts these assumptions, Mr. Cummins maintains. "The results of virtually every bilingual program evaluated during the past 30 years," he says, "show either no relationship or a negative relationship between amount of school exposure to the majority language and academic achievement in that language."

Moreover, he says, "the insufficient-exposure hypothesis" implies a bizarre theory of cognitive development: that first and second languages develop separately in the brain. In other words, that knowledge and skills learned in one tongue are not transferable to the other. There is "not one shred of evidence" for this model, he says.

Taken to its extreme, Mr. Cummins says, this view would "leave the bilingual in the curious predicament" of being unable to "communicate with himself." When switch-

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> Power and status relations between minority and majority groups exert a major influence on school performance.
>
> — Jim Cummins, researcher

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ing languages, the bilingual would be hard-pressed to translate what he had heard or said.

'Common Underlying Proficiency'

In opposing the notion of separate language development, Mr. Cummins advances a theory of "common underlying proficiency." That is, that languages develop in the same part of the brain, reinforcing each other at the base, while differing at the surface.

In this "iceberg model," literacy-related aspects of language ability—features that are most cognitively demanding and detached from contextual clues—share much in common. They "are interdependent across languages," he says, while "surface aspects" may differ substantially between, say, English and Swahili.

Thus, according to the theory, once a child has learned to read and think in one language, the transition to a second language will be more efficient.

Successful bilingual-education programs provide considerable empirical support, Mr. Cummins says, for what he has termed the "interdependence hypothesis." Studies in Sweden and the United States, for example, have shown that children who immigrate at the age of 10 or 11, after learning to read in their native tongue, tend to learn a second language quickly, and in other subjects soon outpace language-minority children who received little or no native-language instruction.

Canadian studies have indicated that academic skills learned in one language need not be relearned when instruction shifts to a second language. Such is the case for mathematics and social studies, as well as literacy skills. The full range of proficiencies involved in the ability to read appears to transfer readily, according to researchers, even when there are radical differences between alphabets.

The implications of such findings for Mr. Krashen's "input hypothesis" are significant. A LEP child who has kept up in mathematics through Spanish instruction, for example, will benefit doubly when studying the subject in a "sheltered English" classroom, Mr. Krashen says. "He will not only get more math; he'll get more English" than a counterpart who is behind in mathematics.

"The goal of bilingual programs is English literacy," he continues. "The route is through the first language. . . . You learn to read by reading, by making sense out of print. Vocabulary grows, grammar grows, spelling ability grows, good writing style grows. It's easier to make sense out of print in a language you understand."

And once acquired, these skills provide more content for comprehensible input in the second language.

Two Types of Language Proficiency

Mr. Cummins also takes issue with a prevailing rationale for bilingual education, the conventional wisdom that children cannot learn when there is a mismatch between the languages of home and school.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights summed up this position in 1975: "Lack of English proficiency is the major reason for language-minority students' academic failure. Bilingual education is intended to ensure that students do not fall behind in subject-matter content while they are learning English."

On its face, Mr. Cummins says, this "language-mismatch hypothesis" is refuted by the overwhelming success of French immersion programs among English-speak-

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Language acquisition, in Stephen D. Krashen's theory, requires "comprehensible input"—ideally, second-language messages that make sense, but that are just beyond the learner's level of proficiency. Not only vocabulary, but grammatical rules are "picked up" in this way, he says, through understanding the messages in which they are embedded.

The Role of Context

Several studies have reported a paradoxical conclusion about bilingual education: Children who are taught school subjects in their native language, given enough time, tend to acquire more English than children receiving intensive English instruction.

How can less be more? Are the studies erroneous? Or is there a scientific explanation for this counter-intuitive finding?

Stephen D. Krashen, a professor of linguistics at the University of Southern California, has advanced a theory to explain the phenomenon. Languages are acquired through "comprehensible input," he says, through receiving understandable messages. A powerful aid in this process is "extralinguistic information," or context, which can give meaning to what would otherwise be mere noise.

"The first rationale for bilingual education," Mr. Krashen postulates, "is that information, knowledge that you get through your first language, makes English input much more comprehensible. It can take something that is utterly opaque and make it transparent."

Limited-English-proficient students who keep up in mathematics, science, and social-studies classes taught in their native language have an edge in second-language acquisition, he explains, when the medium of instruction is gradually shifted to English.

To illustrate how context aids comprehension, Mr. Krashen cites the following exercise in decoding a nonsense word, *reuche*:

"Favorable conditions are necessary to do this activity. That is, you have to have enough *reuche*. If there is too much *reuche*, the object might break. But if conditions are too calm, you will have problems because the *reuche* makes the object go up. If there are obstacles, a serious problem can result because you cannot control the *reuche*. Usually, the *reuche* is most favorable during the spring."

In a test administered by the researcher Shirley J. Adams, only 13 percent of the subjects could define the word *reuche*. But after background information, or context, was provided, 78 percent could guess. The one piece of information that made the difference was: "This passage is about flying a kite."

A Special Advertising Supplement Appears on Pages 33-36

Bilingual-education students at Rockwood Elementary School in Calexico, Calif., read (top) and participate in an English-as-a-second-language class.

Theory Prompts Innovations In Bilingual-Program Designs

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ing Canadian children. At the outset of these programs, children learn exclusively through the second language—geared to their level of proficiency—and English instruction is phased in later.

And theoretically, he says, this view reflects "an inadequate understanding of what is meant by 'English proficiency,' " a shortcoming manifested, he contends, in the practice of "transitional bilingual education" in the United States.

In transitional programs, the emphasis is on hurrying children into mainstream classes and replacing their native language with English—an objective written into the Bilingual Education Act. But Mr. Cummins warns that this approach "is likely to result in the creation of academic deficits in language-minority students."

While LEP children, usually within two years of entering school, develop what Mr. Cummins has called "basic interpersonal communications skills," or BICS, in English, they are not yet equipped for mainstream classrooms, he says. Sometimes dubbed "playground English," BICS is heavily dependent on context—conversational responses, gestures, visual cues, physical interactions.

Children may appear fluent in English, but this type of proficiency is insufficient for the cognitively demanding activities encountered in school, Mr. Cummins insists, citing the high incidence of failure among children who pass through "quick exit" bilingual programs.

The long-term outcome for such students is often "limited bilingualism," he says. While students have developed conversational skills in two languages, they lack the full range of linguistic tools they need for thinking.

Attainment of "cognitive-academic language proficiency," or CALP, Mr. Cummins argues, is necessary for children to succeed in the "context-reduced, cognitively demanding" activities of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and other school subjects. This typically takes five to seven years, he says, and is best achieved by building on the linguistic base language-minority children bring to school, rather than trying to replace it.

Native-language instruction, in his view, is "much more than an interim carrier of subject-matter content."

It is rather, he says, "the means through which the conceptual and communicative proficiency that underlies both [native-language] and English literacy is developed."

Late-Exit Bilingual Model

Mr. Cummins's theory of language proficiency implies an instructional model that breaks with quick-exit, transitional bilingual education. It entails several years of native-language instruction—not only literacy, but concept development in all subjects. At the same time, children should be receiving communication-based E.S.L. and sheltered-English classes. The payoff takes time—until the 5th or 6th grade—but Mr. Cummins argues that, because of the transferability of cognitive-academic learning proficiency, it comes "at no cost to English."

At this point, however, the theory raises a logical series of questions: If successful immersion programs have shown that children can learn through a second language, why can't CALP be developed through English instruction? Why is bilingual education necessary for language-minority children in the United States? And why not pour all available resources into developing

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Bilingualism: A Cognitive Advantage or Disadvantage for Children?

Language preservation was the overriding goal of 19th-century bilingual-education programs. The maintenance of Spanish was an objective in Miami's Coral Way experiment of the early 1960's. And parents' desire to see their children become fluent in two languages was a major impetus for the development of Canadian immersion programs.

But in the United States today, few bilingual programs strive to develop lasting bilingualism. Federal policy prescribes *transitional* bilingual education—a remedial, rather than an enrichment, model. Continuing native-language instruction beyond the point at which children become proficient in English is controversial—even in California, where state law allows for maintenance programs.

Some opposition to language-maintenance programs is based on the fear that bilingual societies are divided societies. But another kind of concern may underlie much of the negative attitude toward bilingualism in this country—a lingering suspicion that fluency in more than one language is confusing to the brain. Until recent years, in fact, a majority of educational psychologists viewed bilingualism as a cognitive disability for young children.

Kenji Hakuta, an associate professor of psychology at Yale University, has traced the "language handicap" theory back to the early part of the 1900's. Backed by rising public sentiment against immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, he says, some psychologists warned then that the "new immigrants" could spoil "the gene pool" of the United States.

In addition, Mr. Hakuta points to:

- H. H. Goddard's 1917 conclusions, drawn from results of the Binet intelligence test administered at Ellis Island, that three-fourths of adult Jewish immigrants were "feeble-minded."
- Florence Goodenough's 1926 work that "showed a negative relationship between the amount of foreign language used in the home and the median I.Q. of the groups" studied.
- George Thompson's widely used American textbook on child psychology, published in 1952, which asserted: "There can be no doubt that the child reared in a bilingual environment is handicapped in his language growth. One can debate the issue as to whether speech facility in two languages is worth the consequent retardation in the common language of the realm."

The conclusions are suspect, Mr. Hakuta says, because experiments that found bilingualism was a handicap generally disregarded socioeconomic status and other factors that could influence test performance, typically comparing poor bilinguals to more affluent monolinguals.

At the same time, he expresses some skepticism about research that has reached the opposite conclusion: that bilingualism is a decided cognitive advantage. Beginning with a 1962 study by Elizabeth Peal and Wallace E. Lambert of McGill University, several psychologists have argued that proficient bilingualism enhances cognitive flexibility.

Jim Cummins, an associate professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, has advanced a "threshold hypothesis," arguing that a certain level of competence in both languages is necessary to yield positive cognitive effects. Conversely, he argues, limited or "subtractive bilingualism," in which the goal is to replace a child's native language, can have negative cognitive effects.

Though Mr. Hakuta cautions that design problems in such research make it difficult to draw firm conclusions, he says his own work has suggested a mental edge for children who are "balanced bilinguals"—especially in a nonverbal measure of intelligence—as compared with children who speak two languages, but are dominant in one or the other.

Certainly, he adds, there are social and economic advantages to bilingualism, echoing a common complaint among bilingual educators, who say a lack of maintenance programs results in "a waste of linguistic resources."

Spanish-speaking children, for example, are rarely given an opportunity to continue native-language study beyond the 3rd or 4th grade, and their abilities in the language usually erode or, at best, stabilize at that level. Then, in high school, they may be required to enroll in Spanish I or another foreign-language course.

Whether or not the lack of Spanish-maintenance programs also represents a wasted opportunity for cognitive development is a question for further research, most bilingual-education advocates agree. But Mr. Cummins sums up the view of many researchers when he says: "Bilingualism is not bad for the brain, and it's probably good."

Jim Cummins, a researcher on second-language acquisition, argues that minority children, reacting to messages about their inferior status, frequently exhibit "bicultural ambivalence": shame of the first culture and hostility toward the second.

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quality E.S.L. and English-immersion programs?

Mr. Cummins answers that "sociocultural determinants of minority students' school failure, [which] are more fundamental than linguistic factors," dictate special treatments.

He points out that there are academic benefits in encouraging language-minority children "to take pride in their cultural background," and in developing proficient bilingualism. In an English-dominant society, he says, both goals are endangered by "English-only" instructional approaches.

In addition, he says, a larger solution lies in "empowering minority students." Bilingual education, he maintains, is merely part of the educational intervention that is necessary to "counteract the power relations that exist within the broader society."

French Immersion

The Canadian experiment with immersion provides a concrete illustration of these arguments. One of the most successful language programs ever studied, French immersion has played a major role in the development of second-language-acquisition theory.

It began in the mid-1960's, when a group of English-speaking parents in St. Lambert, a suburb of Montreal, began meeting to discuss their frustrations over the linguistic and cultural segregation of their community. In particular, they were disturbed about their children's inability to gain fluency in French, despite a 12-year school curriculum in that language.

The prevalent "audio-lingual method" of grammar and vocabulary drills was clearly not producing functioning bilinguals, the parents believed. Working with Wallace E. Lambert and Wilder Penfield, two researchers on bilingualism at McGill University, they pressured the St. Lambert school district to try a new approach.

In the fall of 1965, administrators reluctantly agreed to an experimental French immersion program. Its goals were "to provide . . . functional competence in both written and spoken aspects of French; to promote and maintain normal levels of English development; [and] to ensure achievement in academic subjects commensurate with students' academic ability and grade level."

The program also sought "to instill in the students an understanding and appreciation of French Canadians, their language, and culture without detracting in any way from the students' identity with and appreciation for English-Canadian culture."

The initial class of 26 English-speaking kindergartners entered a school program conducted entirely in French. Not until the 2nd grade, after children had learned to read in the second language, was English language arts introduced for one period a day. Gradually, the proportion of English was increased in other subjects until it reached about 60 percent by the 6th grade.

To minimize the students' anxiety, teaching methods avoided over-correction of errors in French. Children were motivated to acquire the language "to engage in meaningful and interesting communication," according to Fred Genesee, a McGill University psychologist.

Recognizing that "comprehension of language usually comes before their production skills," he says, the program did not require children to use French among themselves or with the teacher until the end of the 1st grade.

The outcomes of the experiment came as a pleasant surprise to everyone, and especially to skeptical district officials. According to Jim Cummins, children achieved "native-like levels in the receptive aspects of the language, in their listening skills and their reading skills."

While their speaking and writing skills were distinguishable from French natives, he reports—probably because of insufficient social interactions with French-speakers, he says—the immersion students became "quite fluent and quite comfortable in speaking French for the most part."

And while the children picked up the second language, Mr. Cummins adds, they made excellent progress in English and other academic subjects. The social goal of cross-cultural understanding appears to have been met as well, based on assessments of students' attitudes toward their French neighbors.

As English-speaking parents learned about the success of immersion, demand for the program spread throughout Canada, and enrollment has reached about 200,000, according to Mr. Cummins. Variants now include delayed immersion, beginning in the middle elementary grades, and late immersion, beginning early in secondary school.

Where school administrators have remained resistant, Mr. Genesee says, efforts to persuade them have usually succeeded with the help of an advocacy group known as Canadian Parents for French.

Additive vs. Subtractive Bilingualism

There are virtually no English immersion programs for French-speaking children in Canada. Nor should there be, say the immersion researchers.

The approach, they insist, is appropriate only for language-majority children, whose native language is not jeopardized by low social status. Even in Quebec, where 80 percent of the population speaks French, Anglophone children's first-language skills develop regardless of the quantity of English instruction they receive in school, asserting to immersion research.

For them, French immersion is a process of "additive bilingualism," an enrichment program in which they acquire a socially and economically valuable skill, without undermining their English competence or identification with the majority culture.

For French-speaking children, by contrast, the social and cultural dominance of English makes the native language "vulnerable to neglect and replacement," according to Mr. Lambert, one of the designers of French immersion. For language-minority children, he says, an English-immersion program "would result in a slow subtraction of the students' French and its replacement by English."

Far from a desirable goal, this phenomenon of "subtractive bilingualism" entails adverse "cognitive and educational consequences," Mr. Lambert says. "The trouble is that, for most language-minority children, the home language has been the critical linguistic system associated with the development of basic concepts from infancy on."

"It would be an enormous mental-gymnastic feat for these children to replace and reprogram these concepts in English . . . and at the same time, try to keep up with English-speaking peers in subject matters that introduce new ideas which build on basic concepts," he says.

It should come as no surprise that, when placed in this situation, a disproportionate number of language-minority children in the United States fall behind in their subjects, drop out of school, and question their cultural identity, he adds. They have been "placed in a psycholinguistic limbo where neither the home language nor English is useful as a tool of thought and expression, a type of semilingualism."

Bilingual education is the answer for such students, according to Mr. Lambert. The development of native-language proficiency can protect against the loss of that language—and maintain cultural pride—while they develop the English skills needed to succeed academically. Quality bilingual programs, he says, can "turn subtractive bilingualism into additive bilingualism."

In deciding what instructional treatment can best promote proficient bilingualism, Mr. Lambert and Richard Tucker of the Center for Applied Linguistics have formulated the following guideline: "Priority in early years of schooling should be given to the language . . . least likely to be developed otherwise—in other words, the language most likely to be neglected."

This principle, in the view of Canadian immersion researchers, argues against English immersion as an alternative to bilingual education for language-minority children in the United States. Early results from a federally financed study of English immersion appear to confirm this hypothesis.

Sociopolitical Factors

Mr. Cummins of the Ontario Institute concludes that "power and status relations between minority and majority groups exert a major influence on school performance." The lower the status of a "dominated group," he says, the lower the academic achievement.

He cites research on the school failure of Finnish immigrants in Sweden, where they are considered a low-status group, as compared with their success in Australia, where being a Finn carries no social stigma. In addition, he says, children of the Burakumin minority "perform poorly in Japan, but as well as other Japanese students in the United States."

Reacting to messages about their inferior status—which tend, Mr. Cummins says, to be perpetuated by the schools—minority children frequently exhibit what he calls "bicultural ambivalence": shame of the first culture and hostility toward the second.

Bilingual educators report, for example, that some Mexican-American children refuse to speak their native language, even though their English skills are poorly developed.

Interactions with educators, Mr. Cummins says, are important factors in "empowering" or "disabling" language-minority students; whether schools revere or reject a minority language is near the top of the list. The benefits of successful bilingual programs, he says, may be more a result of their affirmation of the LEP child's cultural identity than to their fostering of native-language cognitive skills.

Conversely, he asks, "Is the failure of many minority students in English-only immersion programs a function of cognitive/academic difficulties or of students' ambivalence about the value of their cultural identity?"

Either way, he says, bilingual education is the more appropriate treatment.

The first substantial criticism from experts on native-language instruction came in 1978 with the release of an American Institutes of Research evaluation of federally funded bilingual-education programs. The study, which encompassed 38 bilingual programs and more than 7,000 limited-English-proficient children in 150 schools, remains the largest evaluation of Title VII's impact, although a broader longitudinal study is now in progress.

Debate Over Effectiveness Has Shaped Federal Policy

Does bilingual education work? That "simplistic question ignores the complexity" and variety of bilingual programs and also "serves to fuel a divisive debate," argues a new report by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Basic research on second-language acquisition provides far more "insights to teachers on effective classroom practices and [on] how they might help limited-English-proficient students," says a panel of experts convened by the group.

And yet, there is no avoiding the controversy over effectiveness, which has dominated federal policy considerations. Even the A.S.C.D. feels the need to affirm that "bilingual education works."

Skeptical views about native-language instruction began appearing on the nation's editorial pages in the mid-1970's. In 1978 came the first substantial criticism from experts, with the release of an American Institutes of Research evaluation of federally funded bilingual-education programs.

The study, which encompassed 38 bilingual programs and more than 7,000 LEP children in 150 schools, remains the largest evaluation of Title VII's impact, although a broader longitudinal study is now in progress.

The AIR study reviewed the students' achievement-test scores for 1975-76 (and a smaller sample for 1976-77) to compare the effectiveness of bilingual education with that of "submersion," or no special help for LEP children. After pooling the results for both groups, researchers could find no significant advantage for bilingual programs; in English reading, the submersion students actually fared better, according to the report.

Press accounts of the AIR findings, which came at a time when many school districts were chafing under pressure from the federal office for civil rights to institute bilingual programs, fanned the bilingual-education controversy.

Advocates of bilingual education attacked the report's methodology. They argued that it unfairly judged the concept of native-language instruction by statistically lumping together a diversity of instructional approaches, language and socioeconomic groups served, and degrees of teacher preparation.

Above all, the quality of bilingual instruction varied widely, they said. "In such an analysis," according to Tracy C. Gray and M. Beatriz Arias of the Center for Applied Linguistics, "the positive effects found with the good programs are often canceled out by the negative effects found with the bad programs."

Also, the AIR study had measured student progress over only 5½ months—too short a period, critics argued, to gauge the effectiveness of bilingual approaches. Moreover, control groups tended to have brighter students, including former bilingual-program students, thus biasing the comparison, the critics charged.

Rudolph C. Troike, then director of the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, compiled a monograph describing 12 bilingual programs in which students "exceeded the achievement levels of control groups or district norms, and in several instances they exceeded national norms in English, reading, and math."

Mr. Troike documented program successes among French-speaking children in St. John Valley, Me.; Spanish-speakers in Santa Fe., N.M.; Navajos in Rock Point, Ariz.; and Chinese in San Francisco. Clearly, both sides could marshall program-evaluation evidence.

Baker-de Kanter Report

In 1980, the U.S. Education Department's office of planning, budget, and evaluation, which had directed the AIR study, embarked on an internal review of the research literature at the request of the White House Regulatory Analysis and Review Group.

The Carter Administration was then drawing up its ill-fated *Lau* regulations, which would have mandated bilingual education for LEP children wherever possible. But in August, without waiting for the department's conclusions, the White House went ahead with the unpopular proposal, which the Reagan Administration subsequently withdrew in early 1981.

Keith A. Baker and Adriana A. de Kanter, respectively a sociologist and a public-policy researcher in the office of planning, budget, and evaluation, launched the project anyway. Their goal was to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to justify a federal mandate for bilingual education.

After reviewing more than 300 studies, about half of which were primary evaluations of actual programs, the researchers judged most of the research to be methodologically unsound. In the end, all but 28 studies were thrown out because of design weaknesses.

Among the evaluations left out were all 12 cited by Mr. Troike, along with many of bilingual education's best-publicized success stories. Among those included by Mr. Baker and Ms. de Kanter was the AIR study, despite the controversy over its methodology.

In a majority of the 28 reports, the researchers found, there were no significant differences in student English or mathematics performance between transitional bilingual education and submersion. Among the studies that showed one method was superior, the score was split about evenly between the two. And some research indicated that either immersion or English as a second language was superior to bilingual education or submersion.

"No consistent evidence supports the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education," Mr. Baker and Ms. de Kanter concluded. "An occasional, inexplicable success is not reason enough to make transitional bilingual education the law of the land." They added that "the time spent using the home language in the classroom may be harmful because it reduces [the time for] English practice."

"Federal policy should be more flexible," the report recommended. "Although transitional bilingual education has been found to work in some settings, it also has been found ineffective and even harmful in other places. Furthermore, both major alternatives to transitional bilingual education—structured immersion and E.S.L.—have been found to work in some settings."

The researchers discussed the central complaint raised against the AIR study, that the uneven quality of bilingual programs invalidated global comparisons with other approaches. "Without some independent measure of the success of implementation of each project," they argued, this hypothesis "is a meaningless tautology."

Even if the conclusion were true, the re-

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there said, it might "be more cost-effective to switch to alternative instructional methods [than] to undertake large-scale efforts to redesign and properly implement transitional bilingual education programs."

Little Evidence for Immersion

The study pointed to the need for "a widespread, structured-immersion demonstration program," based on positive program-evaluation findings. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett has enthusiastically embraced immersion, along with E.S.L. instruction, as a promising alternative to bilingual education.

But "there is extraordinarily little evidence for English-only programs showing much promise," says Mr. Troike, now professor of education at the University of Illinois. While "there is an enormous methodological base in E.S.L., oriented toward whether one method works better or not," he adds, there has been no research comparing the effectiveness of E.S.L.-only approaches against bilingual education.

For the past decade, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, the E.S.L. professional organization, has endorsed the use of bilingual education wherever practical.

As for structured immersion in English, Mr. Baker and Ms. de Kanter, writing in 1981, could cite only a controversial, unpublished study claiming positive effects for this approach. And, because its bilingual teachers provide a daily Spanish-language component, considerable dispute remains about whether the preschool program studied, located in McAllen, Tex., should be termed "structured immersion."

The authors' enthusiasm for the method was based largely on evaluations of French immersion with English-speaking children in Canada. Researchers who designed and studied these programs have warned, however, that their success should not be extrapolated to justify immersion for language-minority children, which they predict would be harmful.

Rejecting these objections as "untested theoretical arguments," Mr. Baker and Ms. de Kanter said, "Immersion may not transfer successfully from Canada to the United States, but this is an empirical question that must be answered by direct test."

Over the intervening six years, little additional evidence has accumulated to confirm immersion's effectiveness here. In January, after Secretary Bennett's most recent proposal to remove funding restrictions for alternatives to bilingual education, the Education Department could cite only one published primary study that supports the promise of English immersion.

The office of planning, budget, and evaluation is directing a four-year, multi-million-dollar study of "immersion strategies" by S.R.A. Technologies Inc. But according to early test results, students receiving such instruction are faring poorly compared with children in both "late exit" and "early exit" bilingual programs—even in English reading. The department has argued against drawing conclusions from these "preliminary results."

Critiquing the Critics

The Baker-de Kanter report, although never officially endorsed by the Education Department, was leaked to the press in September 1981. Its widely publicized conclusions were regarded as an indictment of bilingual education—an interpretation the authors have disavowed.

As with the AIR study three years earlier, bilingual-education supporters protested the report's methodology, criticizing its program labels as oversimplified and misleading because they lumped together a variety of instructional treatments.

The researchers were charged with using a double standard of methodological acceptability to exclude evaluations favorable to native-language instruction and to include those that were unfavorable. And the "vote counting" approach—tallying studies on each side of the effectiveness question—was described by critics as a crude research tool at best, or an instrument of political bias at worst.

The most influential rebuttal of the Baker-de Kanter study appeared in 1985. Ann C. Willig, an educational psychologist now at the University of Texas, completed a review of the study's data using a sophisticated statistical technique known as "meta-analysis."

By combining "mean effect sizes," or differences between programs, that sometimes were too small to be statistically significant in individual studies, Ms. Willig's methodology allowed for a more precise measurement of overall differences in student achievement between bilingual and submersion classrooms.

The meta-analysis also adjusted for 183 variables that Mr. Baker and Ms. de Kanter had not taken into account, ranging from student and teacher characteristics to instructional methodologies to the language of achievement tests. But most important, the meta-analysis controlled for methodological flaws in the evaluations under review.

Reanalyzing the Data

The Willig study reanalyzed 23 of the 28 evaluations included in the Baker-de Kanter report, excluding nonprimary studies and the French immersion research as not applicable in the United States. She accepted the Education Department researchers' decision to disqualify a long list of studies supporting the effectiveness of bilingual education.

Nevertheless, a meta-analysis of the Baker de-Kanter data "consistently produced small-to-moderate differences favoring bilingual education," she reported. The pattern prevailed on English tests of reading, language skills, mathematics, and total achievement, as well as on Spanish tests of listening comprehension, reading, writing, total language, mathematics, social studies, and attitudes toward school or self.

These "significant positive effects," Ms. Willig said, became visible only when statistical controls were applied for methodological inadequacies.

In other words, the better a study's research design, the better bilingual education fared. For example, where evaluations used random assignment of subjects to experimental and comparison groups, the effect size was largest in favor of bilingual programs.

On the other hand, some research (such as the AIR study) used comparison groups in which students had "graduated" from bilingual programs, in which children were judged to be "English-dominant," or in which teachers were bilingual. In some bilingual programs, successful students exited during the experiment and were replaced by incoming LEP children. Sometimes there was high teacher turnover or frequent reorganization in the bilingual classroom, but not in the comparison classroom.

A major problem for researchers is that random assignment of LEP children to "sink or swim" classrooms has been illegal since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Lau* v. *Nichols* decision in 1974. "True experiments" comparing program alternatives are often impossible to conduct in a normal school. Still, some study designs are more successful than others in controlling unwanted variables.

The generally low quality of research in the field has been a favorite argument of those who maintain that the effectiveness of native-language instruction remains unproved.

Ms. Willig agreed that, "until quality research in bilingual education becomes a norm rather than a scarcity," educators will be unable to fully address the needs of language-minority children. She emphasized, however, that the poorest studies are those that deny, rather than confirm, the benefits of bilingual education.

"In every instance where there did not appear to be crucial inequalities between experimental and comparison groups," Ms. Willig concluded, "children in the bilingual programs averaged higher than the comparison children."

Department Responds

Ms. Willig's 1985 study was cited recently by several experts polled by the U.S. General Accounting Office as evidence against the Education Department's position that research is inconclusive on the value of native-language instruction.

A Dec. 15, 1986, response to the G.A.O. contained the department's first official reply to Ms. Willig: "The Willig meta-analysis reviewed a nonrepresentative and very small sample of the existing research and used an inappropriate methodology. It is by no means a comprehensive review of the literature."

Asked to explain why Ms. Willig's study was any less comprehensive than the Baker-de Kanter report, Mr. Baker said his review was later expanded to include 39 studies. This version, published in 1983, reached conclusions identical to those in the 1981 draft.

Meta-analysis is an inappropriate research tool, argued Alan Ginsburg, Mr. Baker's superior in the office of planning, budget, and evaluation. The issue, he said, is not whether bilingual education is effective "on average, but are there programs that might be appropriate in one community, but not in another? The averaging effect of meta-analysis is quite limiting."

G.A.O. Findings Run Counter to U.S. Education Department Views

Critics of bilingual education have enjoyed an advantage in the debate over its effectiveness, many researchers maintain: Where scientific evidence is contradictory, the easiest position to defend—and the hardest to disprove—is that results are inconclusive.

If there is "no sound basis in research" for favoring bilingual education, argues Chester E. Finn Jr., the U.S. Education Department's assistant secretary for educational research and improvement, "let us permit diversity, innovation, experimentation, and local options to flourish."

The department's message on bilingual education has the virtues of simplicity, flexibility, and apparent even-handedness. At the same time, its position has appeal for nonexperts who have no way of sorting out the complex arguments of educational psychologists, linguists, and statisticians.

It hardly matters that evidence of bilingual-program successes continues to grow, says Stephen D. Krashen, a professor of linguistics at the University of Southern California. The critics, he says, demand still more proof.

Skeptical of the department's characterization of research findings, Representative Augustus F. Hawkins, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, last spring sought help from the U.S. General Accounting Office.

The G.A.O. assembled a panel of 10 experts to review major studies and to evaluate statements by Secretary of Education William J. Bennett and other department officials on issues related to the education of limited-English-proficient children.

A report on the G.A.O. survey, released March 11, said a majority of the experts disagreed with the department on five major points. The experts concluded that:

- "The research showed positive effects for transitional bilingual education on students' achievement of English-language competence"—a justification for maintaining the federal law's requirement for native-language instruction in most programs receiving Title VII grants.
- "Evidence about students' learning in subjects other than English," although less abundant than data on second-language acquisition, also "supported the requirement for using native languages."
- Research provided negligible support for the promise of such alternative methods as structured immersion, an English-only strategy for teaching language-minority children. The G.A.O. report notes that the experience of Canadian immersion programs "is not necessarily transferable to the United States, because of differences in the students' backgrounds, families, communities, schools, and cultural settings in the two countries."
- Claims that high dropout rates among Hispanic students reflect the failure of bilingual education had no scientific basis because of the lack of research on long-term outcomes.
- Overall, the research was conclusive enough to indicate which specific groups of children would most benefit from native-language instruction.

In response, Mr. Finn objected strenuously to the G.A.O.'s methodology—its selection of experts, studies, and statements representing the department's views. He questioned the objectivity of the agency, a nonpartisan arm of the Congress, and argued that the votes of the panel proved nothing.

But the G.A.O. stood by its report. It said the experts had been chosen for their diversity of views, and noted that a majority had either been recommended by the department or been cited in support of the department's position on bilingual education. In addition, the G.A.O. said, the experts considered a broad synthesis of the research, along with extensive official statements on the issue by the department.

As part of its comments to the G.A.O., the department asserted that "our position on bilingual education is valid and unscathed by this inept report."

That contention awaits the judgment of the Congress as it prepares to vote this year on whether to extend Title VII. Bilingual educators say they hope the G.A.O.'s study, by providing a platform to independent experts, will make it harder for lawmakers to ignore their successes in teaching LEP children.

Bilingual Education: Programs and Problems

Project Aims To Bridge Gap Between Research, Classroom

Bilingual-education advocates took sharp issue with the American Institutes of Research in 1978, when it published a study concluding that the Bilingual Education Act had had no "consistent significant impact" in its 10 years of existence.

At the same time, however, educators conceded that there were serious problems with the quality of many bilingual-education programs.

"While the AIR study can and should be faulted for its inadequacies," wrote Rudolph C. Troike, then director of the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, "not all of the negative findings can be easily dismissed, and bilingual educators should take this report seriously as a challenge to improve the quality of programs. To ignore it because of its weaknesses and pretend that all is well would be disastrous for bilingual education, as well as for the students it is intended to serve."

It was in this context that the "case studies" project began.

California has the nation's most prescriptive bilingual-education law. Among its other stipulations, the statute tells school districts when to provide bilingual programs, how to label children as limited-English-proficient, when LEP children are ready to join the mainstream, and how to compensate for a shortage of bilingual teachers.

The law "has been very beneficial," says Fred Tempes, a bilingual-education consultant in the California State Department of Education. "But the law by itself isn't sufficient." High-quality programs for LEP children cannot be legislated, he says. Instead, school districts need to see models of successful approaches that they can adapt for their own students.

In an effort "to bridge the gap between educational research and program practices," the state bilingual-education office launched "Case Studies in Bilingual Education" in 1980.

The project's first task was to summarize the state of the art in second-language acquisition. Articles were solicited from researchers in cognitive psychology, linguistics, and literacy. Contributors included Jim Cummins, an associate professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and Stephen D. Krashen, a professor of linguistics at the University of Southern California.

The resulting work, *Schooling and Language-Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework*, was published in December 1981. It provided a comprehensive description of second-language-acquisition theory and outlined practical implications for the classroom.

Meanwhile, the state bilingual-education office sought out schools where the theory's validity could be tested. Through a computer search, it identified 134 schools that met the necessary criteria: K-6 programs, large concentrations of LEP children whose native language was Spanish, and "a core group of qualified bilingual teachers."

Of the 30 schools that expressed interest, five were selected for the project in late 1981. The sites were geographically and demographically diverse, from a small town on the Mexican border to an urban barrio. But the students had much in common—poverty, limited English skills, and underachievement.

All five schools appeared to be trying hard to make bilingual education work, but their students' test scores were among the lowest in California. The 3rd graders in one school were at the 2nd percentile in English reading; in another, at the 6th percentile. And with the schools' increase in LEP enrollments averaging 46 percent over the previous four years, their situations were rapidly getting worse.

Today, after five years of instruction in the "case studies" curriculum, students in most of the five schools are scoring above district norms in English reading, writing, and mathematics.

News of this dramatic progress—especially at the Eastman Avenue School in East Los Angeles, the Rockwood School in Calexico, and the Ferguson School in Hawaiian Gardens—has prompted other districts to adopt the model. About 25,000 California students are now enrolled in the case-studies curriculum, according to Norman C. Gold of the California bilingual-education office, and its influence is spreading to a much wider circle of educators.

And so, many admirers of the case-studies approach were surprised last year when the project was canceled. The U.S. Education Department decided to terminate the project's Title VII grant two years ahead of schedule, and the State of California has declined to fill the funding gap. The curriculum remains in place at the project schools, but the support services and program evaluations paid for by the grant have been terminated.

Apparently, observers say, what made the case-studies project successful also made it controversial.

> Because [LEP children] can't speak the English language doesn't mean they can't learn. And for them to be doing the same type of things the other kids are doing—you can imagine how that affects their self-image. We found that it eliminated a lot of the stigma, when they saw the teacher was using their [native] language.
>
> — Bonnie Rubio, former principal at the Eastman Avenue School

Thinking in First Language

Central to the case-studies approach is intensive primary-language development. LEP children are taught not only to read, but to think in their native language—a process that generally takes four to five years—before they make the leap to mainstream classrooms.

From kindergarten to about the 4th grade, students also receive instruction in English as a second language, and teachers use "sheltered English" techniques to teach them other subjects. And yet, there is no hurry to speed students' transition to English; in fact, instructors are trained to resist societal pressures to do so.

Such an approach, like other aspects of the case-studies model, represents a break with traditional practices of bilingual education. It also conflicts with the Reagan Administration's new policy in grant competitions of favoring programs that move children into mainstream classrooms "as quickly as possible."

The case-studies schools developed their curricula on the theory that academic success demands higher-level linguistic skills, which, once developed, transfer readily from the native language to English. "Cognitive-academic language proficiency"—rather than the "playground English" that most children pick up quickly—became the significant goal.

In practice, the higher expectations have paid off, according to educators who have participated in the project.

"People are in such a hurry to get kids into English, thinking they're doing the right thing," says Bonnie Rubio, Eastman's principal during the project's first four years. "We were cutting off [native-language instruction] before they developed the thinking process, even the reading-comprehension skills, at about 1st grade."

Lacking a solid base in their native language, she says, many students were being shortchanged. It was common to see 6th graders "still on bunny books" because they had trouble learning to read in English.

Initially, even Eastman's bilingual teachers resisted the "late exit" approach, Ms. Rubio recalls, but as scores began to rise, "we had converts like you wouldn't believe."

"Most of our 3rd and 4th graders now [make the] transition [into mainstream classrooms] just about at grade level," says Roque Berlanga, principal of Furgeson Elementary. "Whereas before, when we were moving them across earlier, we found there would be a year to a year and a half deficiency. And that would increase as they [rose] through the grade levels . . . being frustrated and probably failing."

Starting Point

A "quick exit" philosophy was one of several instructional failings that consultants from the state bilingual-education office noticed in their first visits to the five project schools. While teachers were generally supportive of bilingual education, few were familiar with methodologies in initial-literacy instruction or E.S.L.

"Beyond instruction in reading," according to a report describing the state consultants' needs assessment, "Spanish was infrequently used as a medium of instruction with any degree of regularity." Bilingual teachers were basically on their own in deciding how and when to use Spanish or English. And because there were generally not enough Spanish-proficient teachers, untrained aides were doing the teaching in some classrooms. Except for basal readers in Spanish, the schools had few materials in other subject areas or for supplementary reading.

"Concurrent translation" was the prevalent method of bilingual instruction. Teachers simply repeated each point of a lesson in both languages, an approach that has been widely criticized for wasting instructional time.

Also, many researchers say, that students simply tune out the language they do not understand, a finding that has raised considerable doubts about the effectiveness of concurrent translation. (This is perhaps the single point of agreement between the Cummins-Krashen theory of second-language acquisition and the U.S. Education Department's Baker-de Kanter study.)

The state's needs assessment also determined that E.S.L. instruction in the five schools was grammar-based, rather than communication-based. Teachers generally provided students no "comprehensible English input" and were uncertain when to initiate English reading for LEP pupils.

Clearly, if the project was to test a new instructional approach, teachers and administrators had to apply its methods and curriculum with consistency. To that end,

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> The project has really brought the staffs together. And by exposing the monolingual teachers to E.S.L. techniques, [the team approach has helped them to] understand what the children are going through in the process of acquiring English. And they have a little bit more empathy for these kids.
>
> — Lilia Stapleton, bilingual coordinator for the ABC Unified School District

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Mr. Gold explains, the bilingual-education office stressed three fundamental points: intensive staff development, careful monitoring of classroom practices, and a long-term outlook.

Teachers had to be instructed in—and sometimes won over to—the "theoretical framework" and its pedagogical implications. Their understanding and practice of the new approach had to be evaluated. And administrators had to recognize that "they couldn't expect changes overnight," he adds.

Curriculum Design

In the case-studies curriculum, students are grouped not by grade, but by language proficiency in both English and Spanish. A child's progress through the program's "phases" reflects performance on the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix, a test of conversational-English competency.

All children study essentially the same lessons; only the language of instruction differs. And for Spanish-speaking children, the medium gradually moves toward English. *(See chart at right.)*

Phase I, generally lasting two years for LEP students who start in kindergarten, provides Spanish instruction in subjects that are both intellectually challenging and "context-reduced": language arts, science, health, social studies, and mathematics.

Comprehensible doses of English are provided through E.S.L. instruction, and also through mainstream classes in art, music, and physical education—subjects that make limited cognitive demands, while providing a considerable amount of content for understanding what is said in English.

In Phase II—typically grades 2 and 3—Spanish continues to be the medium of instruction in language arts and social studies, the most cognitively demanding subjects. At the same time, children begin to receive sheltered-English classes in mathematics and science, with instruction tailored to their levels of English proficiency.

In sheltered-English classes, according to the case-studies curriculum design, "teachers change their speech register by slowing down; limiting their vocabulary and sentence length; repeating, emphasizing, and explaining key concepts; and using examples, props, visual clues, and body language to convey and reinforce meaning carried by the language of instruction."

E.S.L. continues in Phase II, and for art, music, and physical education, LEP children are again mixed with fluent English-speakers.

In Phase III, generally grades 3 to 4, students receive some instruction in English language arts, and social studies becomes a sheltered-English subject. All other lessons, including mathematics and science, are taught in mainstream classrooms.

By Phase IV, children are no longer limited-English-proficient, and the transition to English-only instruction is completed, except that students continue to receive language-arts (and sometimes social-studies) instruction in Spanish—a "language maintenance" feature of the case-studies model that was never eligible for federal funding.

Generally, children who enter the program in kindergarten make the transition to Phase IV around the 4th grade, although late-entering students may make the transition as late as junior high school.

Adapting the Model

The curriculum looked good on paper, educators involved in the project recall, but as the schools prepared to adapt it in the

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The Case-Studies Curriculum Model

Phase	Spanish	Sheltered English	Mainstream English
I. Non-English-Proficient (K-grade 1)* (SOLOM 5-11)	Language Arts Mathematics Science/Health Social Studies	E.S.L.	Art Music Physical Education
II. Limited-English-Proficient (grades 2-3)* (SOLOM 12-18)	Language Arts Social Studies	E.S.L. Mathematics Science/Health	Art Music Physical Education
III. Limited-English-Proficient (grades 3-4)* (SOLOM 19-25)	Language Arts	Transitional Language Arts Social Studies	Art Music Physical Education Mathematics Science/Health
IV. Fully-English Proficient (grades 4-6)* (SOLOM 25+)	Language Arts (extended Spanish activities)		Art Music Physical Education Mathematics Science/Health Social Studies Language Arts

* Typical grade level for each phase.

A student at Rockwood Elementary School in Calexico, one of five original schools in the California "case studies" project, participates in a kindergarten reading-readiness class.

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The bilingual-education program at Rockwood—where about 95 percent of new students speak only Spanish—features English-as-a-second-language classes (above) and activities that bring students together to work in groups (right).

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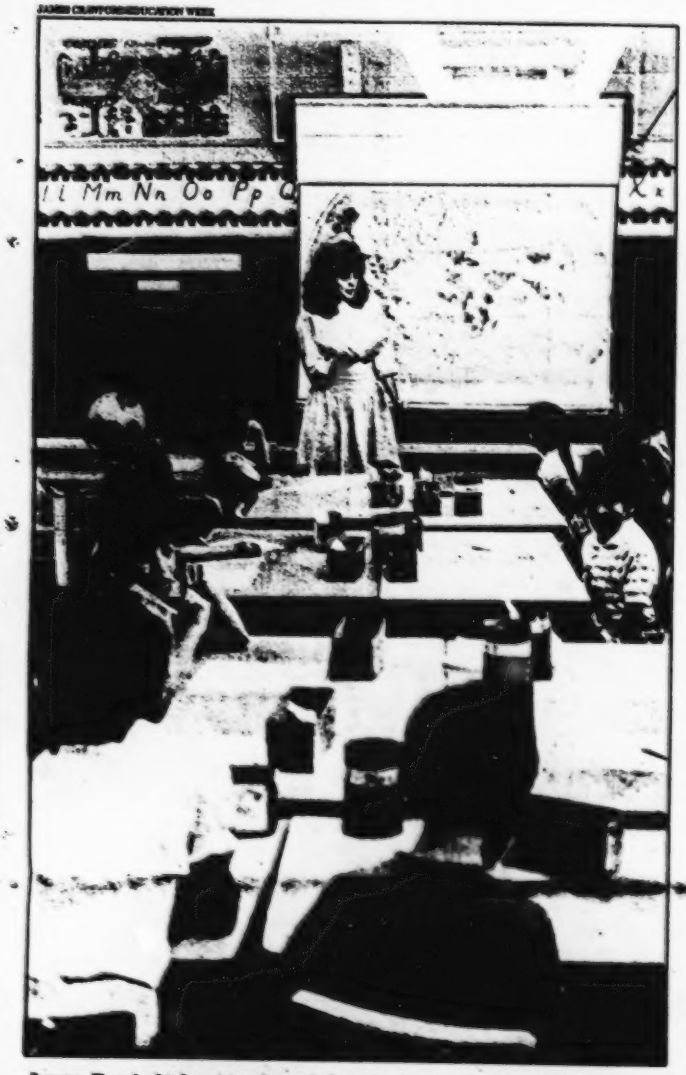

Joanna Esquivel (above) teaches a 3rd-grade class in Spanish at Bell Gardens Elementary School near Los Angeles, where the curriculum closely resembles the case-studies model. Marina Lopez (below) conducts a class in reading readiness at the same school, where many of the students are Mexicans who slip over the border each day to attend classes.

25,000 Students Now Enrolled In 'Case Studies' Curriculum

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1982-83 school year, administrative headaches began. For one thing, the project schools differed in size, in their concentrations of LEP students, and in the availability and enthusiasm of trained staff members.

Eastman, with a K-6 enrollment of more than 1,700 and with 12 1st-grade classrooms, had more flexibility in grouping students than did Furgeson, with fewer than 800 students. At the same time, Eastman had fewer certified bilingual teachers—only 21 were available for 48 bilingual classrooms—along with a range of constraints typical of urban school systems, from strict union rules to incessant demands on administrators' time.

In addition, participants say, teacher resistance had to be overcome. They note that although about two-thirds of the teachers involved expressed support for the concept of bilingual education, many resented being told that the methods they had used for years were inadequate, even counterproductive.

Also, the state consultants were theorists, not practitioners, Ms. Rubio explains, and some of their ideas were cumbersome. Original plans for sheltered-English and mainstream classrooms "would have meant that we'd be juggling children all day long for them to be getting the proper instruction in the right mode," she says.

The solution, arrived at after discussions with teachers, was language-grouping. That is, classrooms would be divided on the basis of English proficiency—an arrangement that necessitated a waiver of California law, which requires that English-speakers make up at least one-third of all bilingual classrooms.

The new plan led to civil-rights concerns among some teachers, but "it didn't make any difference in East L.A.," Ms. Rubio says. "We were 99.9 percent Hispanic. There was no one else to integrate with." Also, students were mixed with English-speakers for art, music, and physical education.

Organizationally, the arrangement proved to be both cost-effective and educationally effective, says Lilia Stapleton, bilingual coordinator for the ABC Unified School District, where Furgeson is located, and a director of the case-studies project.

"Now the teacher doesn't have to teach in two languages," she says. "It's cut down on planning time and allows our students to be more on task than before, because there's no waiting time [during translations]."

In addition, because they no longer spent time with fluent English-speaking children, bilingual teachers were used more efficiently. At Eastman, Ms. Rubio says, the number of bilingual classrooms was reduced from 48 to 30, and fewer instructional aides were needed.

Teacher Resistance

The case-studies model gave teachers no choice: They had to change their methods, and in doing so, they had to cooperate. Teaming was mandatory—not a popular idea at the outset, Ms. Rubio recalls.

"It meant there was more accountability and the need to stay on a tight schedule," she says. "[Previously] some teachers did reading for two hours, spelling during math time, health if they thought of it. Some did science, and some didn't do science because they didn't like it."

Under the new approach, a team typically made up of two bilingual teachers and one monolingual English-speaking teacher consulted on the needs of each student, assigned children to various classes, and followed their progress. The collegial approach, along with growing indications of student progress, had a salutary effect on staff morale, according to administrators.

At first, says Simon Lopez, principal of the Rockwood Elementary School in Calexico, his staff was polarized into "different camps," with bilingual teachers on one side and English-only teachers on the other. "Everybody was doing their own thing" in the classroom, he says, and teachers were preoccupied with their own problems.

But as they began sharing responsibility for instruction, Mr. Lopez recalls, "attitudes changed," and the staff began to "focus on the child." A major benefit of the case-studies project, he adds, has been in "giving us a real mission, a vision of what it is we're trying to do."

Ms. Stapleton says: "It's really brought the staffs together. And by exposing the monolingual teachers to E.S.L. techniques, [the team approach has helped them to] understand what the children are going through in the process of acquiring English. And they have a little bit more empathy for these kids."

Introducing the case-studies curriculum meant revolutionizing the entire school program, a process that is never painless, Ms. Rubio explains. "It changes [administrators'] whole lives: 'We want you to redo your school totally; reschedule all your schedules; change the way you assign children in classrooms; affect all the training for your school staff, the teachers, the aides; change the way you relate to parents.' "

Aggressive leadership by the principal is the key to making the case-studies model work, she argues. In an early stage at Eastman, Ms. Rubio bluntly told resisters either to teach the curriculum—whether they agreed with it or not—or to transfer out.

"It takes the flak of change until you can get to the benefits of change," she says. "If you're willing to take the flak, believe me, it'll be worth it in the end."

'Balanced' Learning

Strong organization, supporters of the case-studies approach say, is essential to ensuring that a "balanced curriculum" is taught, one that focuses not just on language, but on all-around cognitive development as well.

For the program to succeed, they stress, teachers must work in cooperative teams and keep on schedule, rather than going at their own pace or favoring one subject over another.

John Myers, who initiated a similar instructional model as principal of Bell Gardens Elementary School near Los Angeles, argues that the mark of a poor-quality bilingual program is an inordinate concentration on language teaching at the expense of other academic areas.

"Because the kids can't read English," he says, "they give them more reading in English, along with language arts, spelling, and some math. But the thinking areas of science and social studies and health—these subjects where you're picking up the major ideas you're going to deal with in life—aren't being taught. And so the minority children are not over to one side, most of them being poor and already having a dis-

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advantage, and they're not getting an equal opportunity."

With the case-studies approach, Ms. Rubio adds, "One of the things that's exciting is, you can walk into a classroom and the 2nd graders are doing science experiments and talking, talking—they're doing committee work. These are the same kids that in another [program] would be just sitting there wondering what was going on, or in a corner with a translator."

"To me, that made it all worthwhile," she says. "There's nothing wrong with them. Because they can't speak the English language doesn't mean they can't learn. And for them to be doing the same type of things the other kids are doing—you can imagine how that affects their self-image. We found that it eliminated a lot of the stigma, when they saw the teacher was using their [native] language."

Student Outcomes

The case-studies approach set these goals for students:

- After three years, 100 percent of the students would achieve basic oral-communication skills in English.
- After seven years, at least 50 percent would score at or above the 50th percentile in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

At schools where the average reading scores for 6th graders in 1981 ranged from the 1st to the 12th percentile, these were high expectations.

By the end of the fifth year, 1985-86, when funding for the case-studies project was terminated, only one of the goals had been reached, on average, at the five participating schools: At least 60 percent of students in grades 2-6 who had entered the program in kindergarten were scoring at or above California norms in mathematics.

In 1984-85, the most recent year for which overall figures are available, 52 percent of 2nd graders had achieved oral English proficiency; 72 percent of 3rd graders; and 91 percent of 4th graders. In English reading, 39 percent of 3rd graders and 30 percent of 6th graders had reached state norms.

Despite the project's failure to reach most of the original goals, evaluators reported that they were encouraged by a steady upward trend in every category of achievement. And in a theoretically significant finding, they documented strong correlations between Spanish reading proficiency and scores in English reading two years later—findings that supported the hypothesis that native-language literacy transfers to English.

Also, Mr. Gold says, the "schools where the curriculum was fully implemented" achieved the best results. Administrative problems at two of the five sites—the Mission Education Center in San Francisco and the Huron Elementary School in the Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District—kept the model from being thoroughly tested there, he says. Students progressed more rapidly and consistently at the other three schools.

Rockwood Elementary—where about 95 percent of new students speak only Spanish, including some who slip across the border from Mexico each day—was Calexico's lowest-achieving school in 1981-82. By 1983-84, it was the district's highest-scoring school, based on California Assessment Program results. Under the case-studies project, there was a steady, upward pattern of achievement; at other schools in the district, scores fluctuated sharply.

In 1981-82, Rockwood's 3rd graders were at the 6th percentile in reading; by the time those students reached 6th grade, they had reached the 38th percentile. In language, they progressed from the 7th to the 44th percentile; in mathematics, from the 19th to the 64th.

For other grades, the pattern has been the same. In 1985-86, 6th graders scored at the 32nd percentile in reading, the 46th in language, and the 59th in mathematics.

Eastman posted similar progress. Between 1982-83 and 1984-85, scores on state achievement tests climbed from well below the average for Los Angeles to generally above average in reading, writing, and mathematics. After three years, the children were scoring 15 to 20 percentile points higher than their counterparts in East Los Angeles and other inner-city schools, although they remained below state norms.

A final report on the case-studies project, scheduled for completion this spring, will provide a more detailed progress report, using a computer analysis to chart individual students' performance. Richard Piper, the program's evaluator, calls this process "peeling the onion," because it removes extraneous data—for example, the scores of students who transferred in or out of the program—and concentrates on children who received the full instructional treatment.

Mr. Gold predicts this analysis will provide even stronger evidence for the effectiveness of the case-studies model.

Leadership vs. Flexibility

For the California education department, the case-studies project marked a departure from a more "top down" approach, says Mr. Tempes. "We [used to] say, 'Here's what's best for all kids, no matter what the concentrations or what languages they speak, because the state law tells us so. And here's what thou shalt do to make it happen.' "

U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett and others who question the effectiveness of bilingual education have criticized the idea of a government-prescribed method, arguing that school districts need the flexibility to experiment with different approaches.

But Dennis Parker of the California bilingual-education office says that when such a policy was tried in the past, "the record was absolutely dismal." One district official, he says, recently summed up a growing attitude among California school administrators: "We don't need flexibility. We need leadership. We don't know what to do with these kids. We need some guidance."

Mr. Parker concludes: "Don't tell people, 'Do whatever you think is right, and we'll reward you if you come up with some good programs.' But rather, 'Here are some things we think you should try.' "

Mr. Tempes adds: "We worked with [the Eastman] school for five years. People may say that's a poor use of resources. You've got these state consultants who spend 50 percent of their time with one elementary school when you've got 7,000 elementary schools" in California.

"What happened was, they were doing an excellent job and—we didn't even promote this—people started calling and asking, 'Can we come over and take a look?' Lots of [districts] are on the lookout for innovation. They hear about something, and they want to see what it is; they want to evaluate it and use it if they can. That seems to work better than state laws mandating excellence. The excellence really is out there."

By 1985, following enthusiastic stories in Los Angeles newspapers, Eastman began to give tours of its program and soon was receiving more attention than it could handle. Visiting days had to be limited to cut down on disruptions.

Meanwhile, other California educators decided to try the case-studies model. The Ontario-Montclair School District adopted it for all its elementary schools. Los Angeles County began planning a replication project encompassing several school districts and expanding the curriculum to include a Portuguese bilingual program. Last year, the Los Angeles school board appropriated $350,000 for the curriculum (an amount later increased) and hired Ms. Rubio to replicate the model at seven schools serving a total of 10,000 students.

Problems with OBEMLA

And yet, the case-studies approach, with its slow pace of transition to English and its Spanish-maintenance component, ran directly counter to the bilingual-education initiative launched in September 1985 by Secretary Bennett. Relations began to sour between practitioners of the case-studies model and the federal office of bilingual education and minority-languages affairs, observers say.

In the summer of 1986, there was a dispute over the use of federal funds to send case-studies teachers to an institute in Mexico. The three-week program of Spanish-language instruction and pedagogical training was co-sponsored and subsidized by the Secretaría de Educación Pública, the Mexican counterpart of the U.S. Education Department.

According to Mr. Tempes, teachers and administrators had praised the staff-development program as highly effective in the past two years, and OBEMLA had previously approved its cost. Ultimately, the travel expenditures were authorized after Mr. Tempes sought help from allies on Capitol Hill.

But in October, the project was turned down for continued federal support, one of about 6 percent of Title VII "continuation grants" to be canceled after the third year. According to a letter from Carol Pendon Whitten, director of OBEMLA, funding was terminated because "your project has not made substantial and measurable progress in achieving the specific educational goals contained in the approved application."

The California education department had insufficient resources to continue the project, Mr. Gold says.

OBEMLA also denied first-year funding for Ms. Rubio's replication project in Los Angeles, although it did approve a grant for the Los Angeles County project, directed by Ms. Stapleton at ABC Unified.

Principles for 'Case Studies' Project

The following theoretical principles, along with their practical implications in the classroom, form the pedagogical basis of the case-studies project. They are adapted from "Basic Principles for the Education of Language-Minority Students: An Overview," a publication of the California State Department of Education.

1. For bilingual students, the development of proficiencies in both the native language and English has a positive effect on academic achievement.
2. Language proficiency is the ability to use language for both academic purposes and basic communicative tasks.
3. For limited-English-proficient students, reaching the "threshold" of native-language skills necessary to complete academic tasks forms the basis for similar proficiency in English.

Implications:

- Students are provided substantial amounts of instruction in and through the native language.
- Initial reading classes and other cognitively demanding subjects are taught in the native language.
- Sufficient texts and supplementary materials are available in the native language.
- A sufficient number of well-trained teachers with high levels of native-language proficiency are available to provide instruction.
- Teachers avoid mixing English and the native language during instruction.
- Teachers accept regional and non-standard varieties of the native language.

4. Acquisition of basic communicative competency in a second language is a function of comprehensible second-language instruction and a supportive environment.

Implications:

- Comprehensible instruction in the second language is provided through both English-as-a-second-language classes and subject-matter classes.
- When subject-matter classes are used to provide comprehensible English teaching, subjects are selected in which the cognitive demands are low to moderate.
- E.S.L. instruction is communication-based rather than grammar-based and is characterized by the following: (a) content is based on the students' communicative needs; (b) instruction makes extensive use of contextual clues; (c) the teacher uses only English, but modifies speech to students' level and confirms student comprehension; (d) students are permitted to respond in their native language when necessary; (e) the focus is on language function or content, rather than grammatical form; (f) grammatical accuracy is promoted, not by correcting errors overtly, but by providing more comprehensible instruction; and (g) students are encouraged to respond spontaneously and creatively.
- Opportunities for comprehensible English instruction are provided for LEP students both when grouped by language proficiency and when interacting with fluent-English-speaking peers.

5. The perceived status of students affects the interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. In turn, student performances are affected.

Implications:

- Teachers use positive interactions in an equitable manner with both majority- and minority-language students.
- Minority- and majority-language students are enrolled in content classes in which cooperative learning strategies are used.
- Whenever possible, majority-language students are enrolled in classes designed to develop second-language proficiency in the minority language(s) represented in the school.
- Administrators, teachers, and students use the minority language(s) represented in the school for non-instructional purposes.

Native-language instruction, many educators argue, plays an important role in developing students' pride in their Indian identity, a factor that research has linked to improved achievement in school.

BILINGUAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Special Case of Bilingual Education for Indian Students

At least 206 indigenous languages are spoken in the United States—more than all the immigrant tongues combined—and yet, experts say, the need for bilingual education among American Indians and Alaska natives is poorly understood by many who would not question its value for newly arrived Cambodians or Salvadorans. According to researchers, several factors have contributed to this misunderstanding.

For one thing, the indigenous languages are dying out on most Indian reservations. A majority of such languages lack functional, written alphabets, and, with some exceptions, such as Navajo and Crow, these languages are primarily preserved by older generations. Only a fraction of Indian children come to school speaking their ancestral tongues, and English is often the dominant language in their homes. Consequently, few Indian bilingual programs were eligible for federal assistance under early versions of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

But educators and linguists have noticed what they say is a unique phenomenon among Indian students: Even without fluency in their native languages, many are limited-English-proficient, apparently because of the influences those languages have exerted on students' use of English. In amending the Bilingual Education Act in 1978, the Congress acknowledged this problem by expanding the definition of LEP children from Native American backgrounds. In a sense, lawmakers recognized that Indian bilingual education is a special case.

Bilingual education struck many Indian parents as a bizarre reversal of government policy when federal Title VII programs were introduced on Montana reservations in the early 1970's.

Many recalled with bitterness their own school experiences, when they were made to feel ashamed of their native languages and were sometimes disciplined for using them. Why, they asked, should their children, many of whom spoke little Crow or Cree or Cheyenne, go through similar humiliations? Some parents believed in making their children use English at home, "for their own good," and wondered why the schools should do anything less.

Ted Risingsun, a school-board member in Busby, Mont., worked hard to change such parents' minds. He urged fellow members of the Northern Cheyenne tribe to take pride in their language and to recognize the benefits of teaching it to their children. "We found that those who learn Cheyenne well learn English well," he says, and parents were invited into the classroom to see for themselves. By the end of the first year, the bilingual program had "almost 100 percent support" on the reservation, he says.

Growing up in the 1930's, Mr. Risingsun was forbidden by school officials to speak Cheyenne, the only language he knew. "I'd never spoken English," he says, "but at school I was expected to use it. I didn't even know my name [in English] was Ted Risingsun. I hung my head. If there had been a bilingual teacher there, things would have been different."

Rose Chesarek, a Crow educator, tells a similar story of her "sink or swim" experience. "When you come in the school doors, everything is totally foreign. You shed everything at the door, sit at a desk, and you don't understand one word of what goes on. I don't know how I got to 4th grade, because I don't remember too much of anything until then."

The school's ban on using Crow lasted into the 1950's, part of its policy of suppressing everything about students that was Indian, Ms. Chesarek says. "All the way through school," she recalls, "I was told they just wanted to make me a white person, so I'd succeed. The teachers would tell me everything about me was bad. I'd go home and think about it—'What in the hell got me to be an Indian? Why?' "

Now a bilingual teacher in Pryor, Mont., and a doctoral candidate in education, Ms. Chesarek says she is determined to do her part to break the pattern of low self-esteem and underachievement still suffered today by many Crow children. Native-language instruction, she argues, plays an important role in developing students' pride in their Indian identity, a factor that research has linked to improved achievement in school. And on the basis of her own teaching experience, she says she has no doubts about the long-term cognitive benefits of bilingual education.

In 1973-74, when linguists were still developing the Crow alphabet, Ms. Chesarek became the first teacher of reading in that language. Her class of 15 monolingual Crow speakers received initial literacy and mathematics instruction in Crow, along with English as a second language. Although the children did well, the reading program was abandoned after a year, Ms. Chesarek says, and she resigned because of disorganization and controversy in the early Title VII program.

"This year, those students are seniors in high school," she says. "All through the years, I would follow them, talk to their parents, and ask how they were doing. And most parents would say, 'Oh, that one is doing so well, but my others are not. I wonder why.' "

Limited in Two Languages

A major cause of school failure among Indians—and among other minorities as well—is students' inadequate foundation in either English or their native tongue. But the case of limited-English-proficient Indian children is unique, experts say, because, more often than not, they grow up speaking English, not the ancestral language of their tribe.

The problem, explains William L. Leap, an American University linguist, is that the "variety of English common to their home and community [bears] many similarities (in sounds used, in sentence forms, and in style and structure of speaking) to the ancestral language of the community."

"It [is] their knowledge of the locally appropriate 'Indian English' code—not their knowledge of their ancestral language per se—which [is] creating the classroom difficulties," he adds.

Dick Littlebear, a consultant to Title VII programs who is president of the Montana Association for Bilingual Education, agrees: "You find these kids floating between two nonstandard languages, a population growing up without a linguistic home. The kids haven't had the basis to develop reasoning skills."

By the time such children reach age 5 or 6, creating a solid linguistic foundation becomes problematic for educators. Attempts to impose standard English through the correction of errors and other remedial techniques "lead to serious consequences for the child," Mr. Leap says.

A child's "control over his community's Indian English variety may be his only link to ancestral-language fluency," he adds. "It may, for example, help explain why Indian students say they 'understand' their grandparents when they talk, yet they cannot 'speak' to their grandparents in their language. Remediation destroys these linkages—hence, students' rejection of attempts to [impose] standard language structures," especially when schools offer them "no alternative other than to acquire it or reject it."

Bilingual education offers an alternative, Mr. Leap argues. By studying their native language, students can acquire "better control over the non-English grammar" they have internalized. In this way, they become conscious of structural differences between the standard English of academic pursuits and the vernacular of reservation life.

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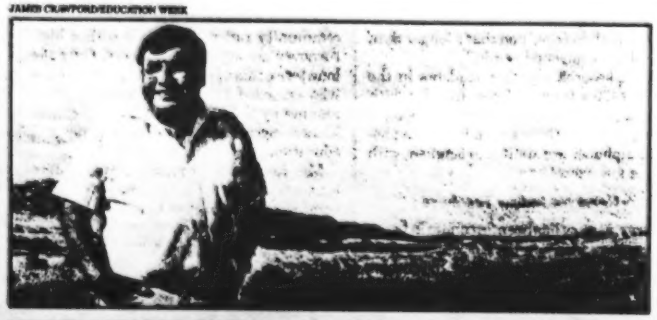
JAMES CRAWFORD/EDUCATION WEEK



Dick Littlebear (right), a consultant to Title VII programs and president of the Montana Association for Bilingual Education, says many Indian children are "floating between two nonstandard languages, a population growing up without a linguistic home. The kids haven't had the basis to develop reasoning skills."

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George Reed, a former Crow educator and linguist, says that today many of his reservation's youth grow up speaking "Crowlish," a blend of the Indian language and English. Native-language instruction can play a role in "helping Indian children sort out their identity," he says, and in slowing the erosion of their ancestral tongues.

"My lexicon is my way of life," Mr. Reed explains. "Culture is expressed by the language, and my language is tied up with the culture."

Home Language Base

Also, research strongly suggests there are academic advantages for Indian children whose language is preserved and used in the home. This was the conclusion of a five-year longitudinal study conducted in the early 1970's by Steve Chesarek, director of Pryor's new bilingual program.

Mr. Chesarek's research followed Crow students' achievement in reservation schools—with and without bilingual education. In those days, native-language instruction at Crow Agency, Mont., was just getting started, and it was "basically an oral program," he says. "But what we found was that if you utilize the kids' own language, you see some rapid growth in a number of areas, including English development. Kids who are fluent Crow speakers learn English very quickly, if somebody sets out to teach them English. And they do well in other academic areas, too."

From 70 percent to 80 percent of Crow children are either bilingual or monolingual in their native language when they enter school, educators estimate, compared with 30 percent to 30 percent on other Montana reservations. Still, some Crow parents try to raise their children as English-speakers—a decision that can have negative effects on a child's school achievement, according to Mr. Chesarek's research.

"English is their only language, but they're already limited-English-speakers" by kindergarten, he says. "They're hearing two Crow-speaking parents—or maybe a Crow and a Cheyenne. . . . Typically, if one of the parents was a fluent English-speaker, the child had no problem with English, but there weren't very many of those."

Out of tradition or necessity—"alcoholism, teen-age pregnancy, or the parents go off to look for a job"—grandparents often take charge of child-rearing on the reservation, says Minerva Allen, federal-programs director for the Hays/Lodge Pole school district in northeastern Montana. And their English skills tend to be even more limited than those of the parents, she adds.

As a group, Mr. Chesarek says, children reared by LEP parents or grandparents start behind and stay behind. By contrast, fluent Crow-speakers may begin two to three years behind fluent English-speakers, but they quickly catch up in English-language skills, according to his research.

On the reservation, Crow children who speak only English "tend to become somewhat isolated," Mr. Chesarek adds. "The Crow-speaking kids aren't as likely to play with them, because they don't speak Crow, and the white kids aren't as likely to play with them, because they're Indian. And so they form their own play group, and they reinforce the limited English that they have."

"If you want to draw a generalization," he says, "it doesn't matter which language you raise your child in. As long as you're fluent in it, they'll become fluent in it."

Early Efforts

The federal government's first foray into Indian bilingual education came in 1968, when it financed a "pan-Indian" project involving the Crow and Rocky Boy reservations in Montana and another in Oklahoma.

Little is known about the results of this early effort, says Cheryl K. Crawley, an assistant superintendent of the school district that includes Hardin and Crow Agency, Mont. But one thing that people did learn, she says, is that "you can't have a pan-Indian bilingual program, because of the enormous differences between tribes and languages."

Mr. Littlebear, a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, echoes that sentiment: "One of the fallacies that white people have about Indians is that they think we're generic."

Variables such as the extent to which an Indian language has been preserved, the role it plays in reservation life, whether it is written as well as spoken, and how it fits into tribal politics have had a crucial effect, educators say, on the development of Indian bilingual education, particularly in its early stages.

On the Rocky Boy reservation, a long tradition of Cree literacy has been nurtured and guarded by the tribal elders, Mr. Chesarek says. "They already knew how to read and write Cree" when bilingual-education programs began, "and so they'd teach the young kids who were going to be teachers. There was no question whether it was culturally pure—it was coming from the experts."

He adds that "there's a whole body of Cree literature that's never been translated into English. They're very jealous of their own copyright. For kids old enough to realize this, there's a motivation to learn to read in Cree."

By contrast, attempts to put Crow into written form began only in the 1960's, when the Wycliffe Bible translators began to develop an orthography, or phonological alphabet. The process continued into the late 1970's with the aid of academic experts, including two Crows who studied linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Only last year was the first comprehensive Crow dictionary completed.

When a new Title VII program began at Crow Agency in 1977, says Ms. Crawley, only 11 adults were known to be literate in the language. That number has increased dramatically, thanks to teacher training and a Crow-studies curriculum at the reservation's Little Big Horn Community College, directed by Dale Old Horn, one of the M.I.T.-trained linguists.

But a decade ago, the idea of teaching Crow literacy was foreign to parents who had never experienced it themselves. And many questioned whether the program's emphasis on Crow culture was time well spent, reflecting parents' dissatisfaction with an earlier Title VII program that featured beadwork and other traditional crafts.

"In the beginning, our biggest goal was public relations," Ms. Crawley explains, "getting parents to understand what we were trying to do. We emphasized that culture in the classroom meant doing academics embedded in a familiar cultural context that Indian children could understand."

Using a newsletter and calendars with monthly messages about bilingual education, the Crow Agency program gradually won over the community, Ms. Crawley says, and parents are no longer asking that their children be excused from native-language instruction.

In fact, many educators argue, the Crow Agency experience illustrates an important side effect of bilingual instruction—the new attitude that it is fostering among many Indian parents, who are less likely to ban or neglect their ancestral language in the home.

Bilingual Materials Center

In addition to parental resistance, the Crow Agency program faced another obstacle—an almost total absence of instructional materials in Crow.

Beginning in 1978, Title VII financed a Bilingual Materials Development Center that published translations of tribal legends and history, along with original stories written by its staff. The center produced bilingual calendars, workbooks, Crow-language flash cards, filmstrips, and bulletin-board exhibits. And it took charge of compiling the first Crow dictionary.

Though located on the Crow reservation, the center also published materials for other Indian bilingual programs in Montana.

Last year, the U.S. Education Department withdrew funding for the materials-development center, a decision Ms. Crawley regards as a setback for Indian bilingual education. "Materials development is vi-

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tal," she says. "No commercial publisher is going to do it, because they can't make any kind of profit" on the limited market for Indian-language publications.

This year, one of the two federally funded centers for materials development will serve an Indian bilingual program operated by the Ute tribe.

A small part of Crow Agency's Title VII grant will now go toward materials, but the amount is far short of what is needed, says Marlene Walking Bear, the program's director. Although the tribal government would be sympathetic to helping out, she says, the budget is tight on the economically depressed reservation.

Introducing Crow Literacy

While perhaps an extreme case, Crow Agency illustrates Indian children's extensive need for language services. Most of the bilingual school's 250 students in grades K-6 come from homes where Crow is spoken. Although many appear fluent in conversational English, Ms. Walking Bear says, 99 percent are assessed as limited-English-proficient.

"They don't have the academic language," she explains. "They can hear and follow directions, but they may not be able to produce."

Upon entering the program, children are taught oral concepts in Crow, and about half their time is spent in English-reading-readiness and E.S.L. instruction. Reading is taught first in English, and the percentage of native-language use in other subjects is gradually reduced to about 20 percent by the 4th grade.

At that time, children are first taught to read in Crow. Along with lessons in Crow history and culture, this language-enrichment program continues through grade 6.

"More and more, kids are reading close to grade level" in English, Ms. Walking Bear says. And while they have yet to reach national norms, scores have improved steadily since 1977.

Ms. Crowley, who developed this instructional model, says that the lack of a basal reader in Crow and of a qualified staff to teach it makes initial reading instruction impractical in the native tongue. "I think the kids find it easier to learn to read English than to read Crow," she argues, "because the Crow words are so long, because the exposure they've had to print already is in English, and they're used to those combinations of vowels and consonants."

As in many Indian languages, Crow words for some simple concepts can be difficult, she adds. For example, the six-syllable word for chair is *baileealuuaache*, or "something to sit on." This is one of many "compound words that came about through contact with whites," Ms. Crowley explains. "It's a description of an object, rather than a simple, everyday word that has been in the language longer."

"Once kids have learned the techniques in English, and they get to 4th grade motivated to learn to read in their own language, then learning to read in Crow comes quite easy for them," she says, adding that Crow literacy mainly serves "to build self-esteem."

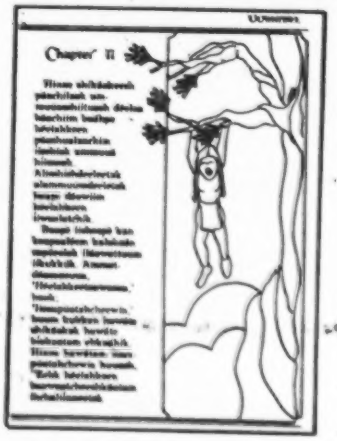
Several educators and researchers, however, take issue with this argument, noting that the Finnish, Magyar, Welsh, and Samoan languages feature word lengths and syntactical complexity comparable to that of Crow and other Indian tongues. "A foreign language always looks formidable to a person who's going to learn it," says Mr. Littlebear, the Cheyenne consultant, adding that Americans who saw the movie *Mary Poppins* now "can say 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious,' and that's longer than any of the Cheyenne words."

Ms. Chesarek says her students in the early 1970's learned Crow literacy with ease and were soon reading "a book a week," because Crow's sounds and its phonetic alphabet are similar to English, with only a few exceptions.

Need for Indian Teachers

Crow Agency has been fortunate in training and recruiting Crow-speaking staff members, who make up 8 of its 15 teachers this year; those lacking fluency in Crow work with 6 or 7 aides from the community. Altogether, there are about 40 certified Crow teachers, Ms. Crowley says, adding that only about half are now teaching on the reservation, not necessarily in bilingual programs.

On the other hand, the Title VII program at nearby Busby has no Cheyenne-speaking teachers and must rely entirely on aides, according to Norma Bixby, chairman of the local school board. Also, because of low pay and geographical isolation, top-notch white teachers for Indian children are hard to find, Ms. Bixby says, noting that the tribal contract school has lost some effective instructors to the Navajo reservation.



In the Hays/Lodge Pole school district, there are two certified Indian teachers in the Title VII program for 82 students, although Ms. Allen, the program's director, has trained three others who remain at the school. To complicate matters, the program is not bilingual, but trilingual, to accommodate children from the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes who live on the Fort Belknap reservation.

The two languages share no more grammar or vocabulary with each other than they do with English, says Ms. Allen, an Assiniboine. But initial reading is taught in both Indian tongues, and "all the kids seem to learn both," along with English, which is taught about 75 percent of the time.

Ms. Allen estimates that in a state where whites rarely know more than a few words of an Indian language, only 1 percent of the certified teachers are Indian. "It would be a great help to the Indian children to have more," she says. "If we could train more teachers, we wouldn't need the federal funds."

Knowledge of the structure of Indian languages is essential to high-quality B.S.I. instruction, says Jon Reyhner, who directs training of bilingual/multicultural teachers at Eastern Montana College. To create a stable program, he says, Navajo administrators in Rock Point, Ariz., in the early 1970's began training teachers from their community rather than cope with a high turnover among white teachers. Over the long term, this approach produced students who exceeded national norms in English reading by the 6th grade, one of the best-known success stories in Indian bilingual education.

Mr. Reyhner's program trains Indian teachers and aides in the methods of bicultural education, native-language literacy, B.S.I., cross-cultural mathematics instruction, and the use of computers in bilingual settings.

Tribal Politics

While supporting the need for more Indian teachers, Mr. Chesarek notes that recruiting from the community creates "a whole new set of social and political problems that can get in the way of how people perceive bilingual education. If you're hiring a local person, it's hard to get rid of him."

Political opposition from the school board at Hardin-Crow Agency sabotaged early bilingual programs there, he says. The white domination of the school board—Hardin is a predominantly white "border town" just off the reservation—was weakened last year when Crows won a voting-rights suit that forced redistricting. But bilingual education remains controversial, observers say, reflecting racial tension in the small Montana town.

At the same time, Mr. Chesarek says, committed bilingual educators at reservation schools have been "politically pushed out" by factionalism within the tribes.

Because of massive unemployment—ranging as high as 85 percent on some Montana reservations—and a scarcity of private-sector employment, Title VII is sometimes regarded as "a jobs program," Ms. Crowley says. And this problem is compounded by the federal mandate for a parent advisory council, which can pressure for hiring based on political or family ties.

In general, however, tribal governments have welcomed bilingual education and its efforts of preserving and developing Indian languages. Several tribes have adopted policies aimed at safeguarding their ancestral tongues. A Navajo education policy adopted under Peterson Zah, a former tribal chairman, requires the Navajo language to be taught in all reservation schools, not as a transition to English, but as a way of maintaining "an essential element of the life, culture, and identity of the Navajo people."

In 1984, the Northern Ute tribe adopted Ute as the official language of tribal government and commerce; it must be taught at every grade in elementary and secondary schools, and all teachers must take in-service training in the Ute language.

As a group, Indian bilingual programs are more dependent on Title VII funding than those serving any other language group. Most tribally controlled schools, run under contract with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, are caught in a perpetual cash squeeze. In January, the B.I.A. announced plans to give tribes a choice of assuming responsibility for 112 more schools or allowing control to be transferred to the states.

Some reservation schools are administered by public school districts, but because Indian lands are not subject to property taxes, these institutions can seldom raise substantial funds on their own and are dependent on federal aid to Indian education. But these programs, such as Johnson-O'Malley assistance, have undergone generally deeper cuts than other Education Department accounts since 1981.

Meanwhile, Montana provides no state aid to bilingual education, and state legislators are generally surprised to learn that there are 10,000 LEP children in the state, Ms. Crowley says. Nearly all of these students come from Montana's 10 tribal groups, who number about 50,000 members in all.

On the reservations, the funding shortage is severe, according to Ms. Bixby, the school-board chairman who also oversees federal education programs for the Northern Cheyenne tribe. "The programs getting cut are the remedial programs," she says, and the tribe has no way of making up the difference. "I wish someone could get our federal government to understand that cutting them means cutting our future."

There are 89 Title VII-supported projects serving Indian children this year, totaling $9.6 million, or 10.7 percent of bilingual-education grants to school districts.

Last year, the Reagan Administration, in rewriting regulations for these grants, tightened the definition of limited English proficiency. The new rules have the potential to exclude many Indian students now receiving Title VII services, educators say. To be eligible, LEP Indian children must now come from homes where there is "substantial use of [the native] language for communication."

Although there was no wholesale elimination of Indian bilingual programs last fall when the federal office of bilingual education and minority-language affairs made its annual grant awards, the threat remains, advocates of such programs argue. They say that an incident last year may have foreshadowed a less favorable climate for obtaining federal aid for their efforts.

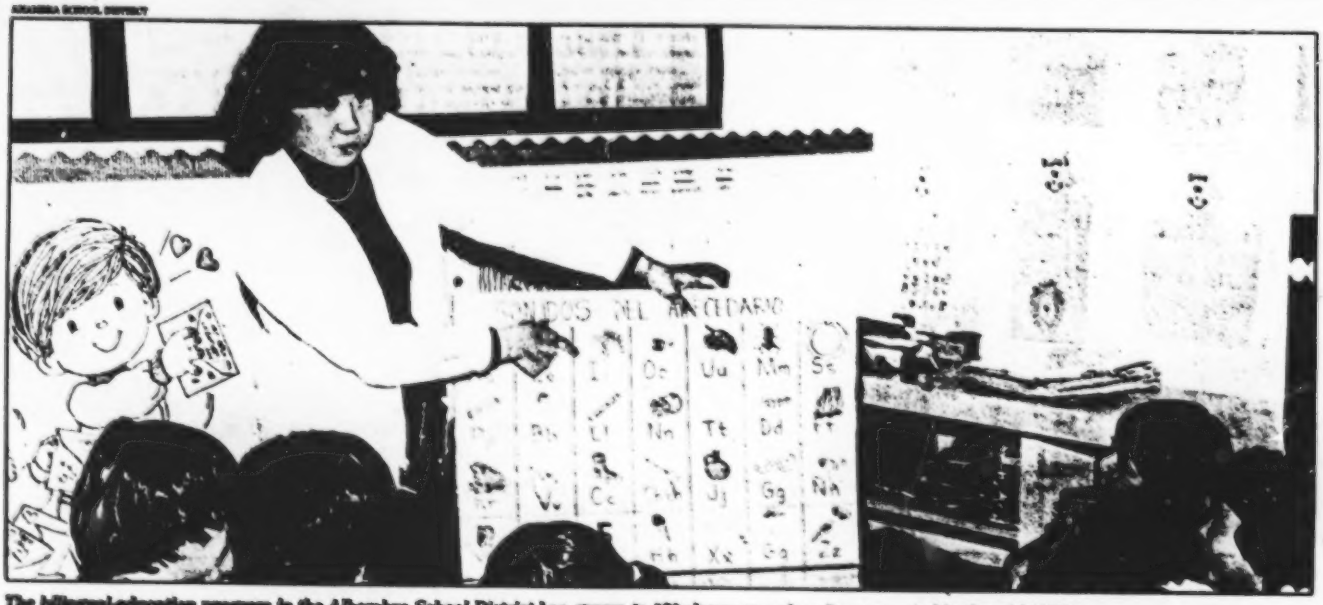
In early 1986, an OBEMLA program officer questioned the funding of an Indian program in Mendocino County, Calif., contending that the Pomo Indian languages there had died out. This is untrue, according to the University of California linguist whom the official had cited as an authority.

In October, Mendocino County lost its Title VII funding after two years of a three-year grant, and its bilingual program had to close several weeks into the school year. The termination provoked widespread indignation among school officials, parents, and tribal leaders. OBEMLA gave first one, then another justification for its apparently unprecedented action, the latest being that the program used no native language, as the law requires.

According to John Simmons, the project director, Indian language and culture are a component of instruction, although the primary focus is on B.S.I. The model was so successful, he says, that he had sought OBEMLA's assistance in replicating it, adding that the office was made fully aware of the curriculum when it first approved funding for it in 1984. The district is appealing OBEMLA's decision.

> When the stepfather pushed the boy over the edge of the cliff, he took it for granted that the boy met a violent death. . . .
>
> — Told by Henry Old Coyote
> The Crow Tribe of Indians

ALHAMBRA SCHOOL DISTRICT



The bilingual-education program in the *Alhambra School District* has grown to *120* classrooms since *it was created in the mid-1970's.*

California Program Grapples With Problems, Scores Successes

Bilingual education faces an uncertain future in California. While the state can claim some of the nation's most successful bilingual-education programs, it has also produced some of the best-organized opponents of bilingualism.

California law currently guarantees rights and opportunities for limited-English-proficient students that are unequaled in other states, bilingual educators agree. In practice, however, the training of bilingual teachers has not kept pace with the growth in the LEP population, which has more than doubled over the past decade. As a result, educators say, the quality of instruction is substandard in many programs, and eligible children frequently go unserved.

The state's bilingual-education statute is set to expire on June 30, and Gov. George Deukmejian has already vetoed one attempt to extend it. Legislative critics of the program have thus far failed to impose radical changes, but they appear to have more than enough votes to block its reauthorization this year. And resistance appears to have stiffened following the overwhelming approval last November of Proposition 63, a constitutional amendment declaring English the official language of California.

New waves of immigrants since the mid-1970's have had an impact on schools in many American communities, but nowhere has it been greater than in California. Vietnamese "boat people," rural Mexicans, affluent Taiwanese, Cambodian and Central American refugees, Filipinos, Koreans, Iranians, and Afghans have all found the state a good place to settle. Nearly one-quarter of immigrants to the United States in 1981 wound up in California.

In 1970, non-Hispanic whites made up 78 percent of California's population; Hispanics, 12 percent; blacks, 7 percent; and Asians, 3 percent, according to the state legislature's Assembly Office of Research. By 1985, the proportion of Hispanics and Asians had mushroomed to 21 percent and 8 percent, respectively; whites had declined to 63 percent, and blacks had increased slightly, to 8 percent.

Because of high birth rates, civil unrest, and debt crises in the countries of origin, no letup in the influx of immigrants, legal or illegal, is foreseen, experts say. Mexico, California's economically troubled neighbor, may see a doubling in its population, from 70 million in 1980 to 140 million in the year 2000, according to some estimates.

By the year 2018, California is projected to become the first "majority minority" state. And because the state's immigrants and other minorities are younger than the white population on average, their influence will be felt sooner in the schools. In the year 2000, minority children are expected to make up 52 percent of the school population, and limited-English-proficient children at least 15 percent.

The California State Department of Education keeps careful track of such demographic patterns in the schools through an annual language census. Its most recent count, in the spring of 1986, showed that the number of LEP students had more than doubled since 1977—from 233,444 to 567,564. Nearly three-quarters of those students were concentrated in the five counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Clara, and San Francisco.

Responding to Change

In the Alhambra School District in the eastern suburbs of Los Angeles, administrators had no choice but to respond to these demographic changes. Substantial numbers of Hispanics began arriving in the district about 20 years ago, and by the mid-1970's, Spanish-speaking children made up 30 percent of the district's enrollment. Also, there were smaller groups of Chinese immigrants, largely in the town of Monterey Park.

But despite a growing population of LEP students, when the district was investigated by the federal office for civil rights in 1977, the only language services being provided were sporadic classes in English as a second language.

The O.C.R. determined that Alhambra was failing to meet its obligations under the U.S. Supreme Court's *Lau v. Nichols* decision. Federal investigators found the district was doing little to remedy a situation where, in the words of the Court, "students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

In response, school officials agreed to set up a small bilingual-education program. Suzana G. Ponce, the district's bilingual coordinator, recalls that, under the first year of Alhambra's "Lau plan," in September 1977, there were 14 classrooms for Spanish-speaking children.

To accommodate an influx of immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong, a Chinese-language program was added the following year, and in 1980, it was divided into Cantonese and Mandarin classrooms. By 1982, there were enough Vietnamese children with limited English skills to start instruction in that language.

Today, Alhambra's bilingual-education program has grown to 120 classrooms, largely because "the Asian population has increased immensely," Ms. Ponce says. In 1985-86, Asian students made up 49 percent of the district's enrollment, and Hispanics about 35 percent; in all, 80 language groups were represented. Outside the four bilingual programs, children receive individualized attention, including E.S.L. instruction and, where possible, assistance in their native languages.

A medium-sized district of 20,000 students, Alhambra has made a substantial financial commitment to recruit and train bilingual teachers, to purchase and develop native-language materials, and to hire instructional aides for every bilingual classroom (something that is not required by law). All teachers in the district must complete 35 hours of E.S.L. training; freeing 13 E.S.L. "pullout teachers" to deal with the most difficult cases. And Alhambra employs a managerial staff of nine to coordinate the program, compared with just one or two in many similar-sized districts.

While the O.C.R. provided the catalyst for Alhambra's commitment to serving LEP children, the change was accomplished largely with the district's own funds. Although its bilingual-education program received federal assistance under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act until last year, "it was always very supplemental in nature," Ms. Ponce says.

Bilingual Law

Perhaps as important as the federal intervention was California's new bilingual-education law, the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act of 1976. As amended in 1981, it provides the most detailed blueprint for serving the needs of LEP children yet enacted by state or federal governments.

The law's most salient feature is its mandate for bilingual instruction wherever practical at the elementary-school level. Bilingual classrooms must be established in schools where there are at least 10 LEP children of the same language group at the same grade level. In other situations, each LEP student must have an "individualized learning program" that features at least 20 minutes a day of special language instruction.

Although the number of state-approved experiments is limited each year, districts have some flexibility to try other program options, including English immersion. Also, the law authorizes bilingual-maintenance programs and "two way" bilingual instruction—in which English-speaking children learn a second language—but these options are relatively rare. Although bilingual classrooms are not required in grades 7-12, students must be placed in "individualized language programs" or "language development" classes.

To avoid language segregation, the law requires that at least one-third of the students in bilingual classrooms be fluent English-speakers. Schools must identify students' native languages upon their enrollment and assess language-minority children's oral English proficiency before placing them in bilingual or regular programs. Parents have the right to insist on English-only classrooms for their children. And standards for reclassifying LEP students are mandated.

In addition, the law sets strict certification requirements for bilingual teachers,

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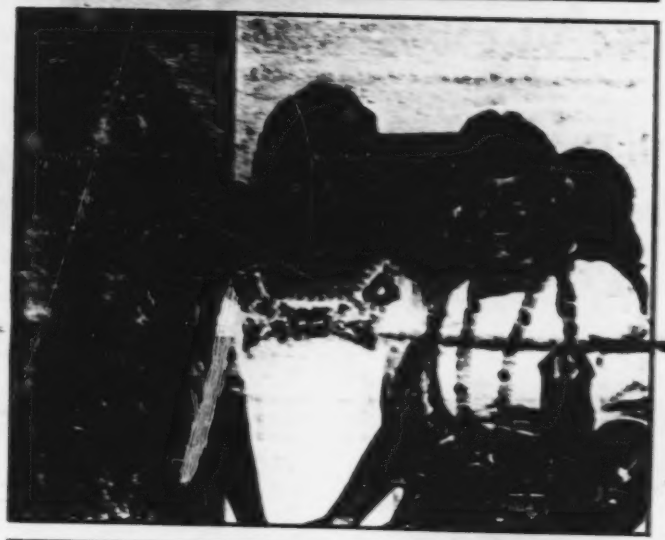

Regardless of what language limited-English-proficient children bring with them to school, says Suzanne G. Ponce of the Alhambra district, "strong primary-language skills predict success in English." In a study two years ago, Chinese students in the 4th, 8th, and 6th grades who had completed the district's bilingual program performed as well as, or better than, their English-speaking peers from both Chinese and non-ethnically handicapped backgrounds.

Districts Finding It Difficult To Recruit Qualified Teachers

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who must qualify in three competencies: a second language, culture, and methodology. Recognizing the current shortage of qualified teachers, the law allows districts to staff bilingual classrooms with those who have signed "waivers," or agreements to take language and other courses toward certification. In such classrooms, instructional aides must be provided.

'Sunset' Review

How well is the 10-year-old law working? To answer that question, Governor Deukmejian appointed a "Sunset Advisory Committee" to review bilingual education in California before the legislature took up the issue of reauthorization last year. After extensive hearings and school visits, the panel concluded, "When the law and regulations are properly implemented, the programs appear to be effective."

Flexibility for school districts is one of the law's strengths, the committee found. Although critics sometimes evoke the specter of districts having to provide school services in scores of languages, the reality is that most language groups are too small to trigger bilingual classrooms. In the Los Angeles schools, where at least 79 tongues are represented, bilingual instruction is offered in 6: Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, and Armenian.

"The benefits of the bilingual program are many and varied," the advisory report continued. "The program enables students to develop cognitive abilities in their primary language while acquiring English. Producing bilingual citizens is an economic and employment strength. Other benefits may include sustained academic achievement, lowering of the dropout rate, smoother cultural adjustment, and greater parental support."

But the committee also identified significant weaknesses. The "individualized language programs," which serve the 39 percent of elementary-school students who are not in bilingual classrooms, as well as 75 percent of secondary-school students, "are generally regarded as inadequate," the report said. Districts have the discretion to do as much, or as little, for those students as they choose.

A lack of guidelines, instructional materials, and resources made bilingual education ineffective at the secondary level, the panel added, suggesting that strengthening the program might reverse "alarming dropout rates" in California high schools.

State categorical grants had failed to keep pace with districts' needs as the LEP population increased, the report said, especially for financing teacher training and incentive pay. According to the state education department, approximately $100-million, or about 3 percent of California's total spending for education, goes to programs for LEP students each year. That amount in 1986-87 includes federal subsidies of $26.2 million under Title VII and $13.9 million under the federal emergency immigrant-education program.

Teacher Shortage

The bilingual program's biggest weakness by far, according to both critics and supporters, is the difficulty districts have in recruiting enough qualified teachers for bilingual classrooms. Only about 28 percent of the LEP children in California elementary schools are taught by a teacher who is fluent in their native language. That means that aides—usually with minimal training—are responsible for the bulk of instruction, and especially for teaching children to read.

Last year, 8,020 of California's 14,350 bilingual teachers, both elementary and secondary, were certified; the rest were on waivers. By 1990, the Assembly's research office estimates, the state will have only 12,000 of the 23,000 certified teachers that it will need.

The Sunset Advisory Committee urged the legislature to provide financial incentives for teachers to acquire the extra competencies necessary for bilingual certification. Pay decisions are now left up to individual school districts, and practices vary considerably. Some districts pay for teachers' language courses and count academic credits toward raises; others do neither. Stipends for acquiring bilingual certifications, where they exist, are usually modest. In fact, because bilingual teachers are usually newer to the field, their salaries are below average—$25,912 in 1986-85, compared with the statewide median of $27,220.

Current law actually provides a disincentive to waivered teachers' becoming certified, says Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, a teacher trainer in the Los Angeles County Department of Education. "Once you become bilingual and pass your certification, you lose your aide, your help in the classroom. It's a Catch-22."

The advisory panel agreed that few waivered teachers were making progress toward becoming certified during the six-year period allowed. In 1984-85, only 6 percent of those who took the bilingual-certification examination passed all three sections.

For English-speaking teachers in mid-career, the prospect of being forced to learn Spanish—or Vietnamese, Khmer, or some other "exotic" language—has been extremely unpopular. This provision of the law, more than any other, has fueled opposition to bilingual education in the California legislature.

Assemblyman Frank Hill, a leader of Republican critics, calls the provision "job blackmail." Mr. Hill has introduced a bill that would eliminate the bilingual waivers, along with the requirement for bilingual classrooms.

Even strong supporters of the current law question whether the waiver system will solve the bilingual-teacher shortage. In Alhambra, teachers who have studied Vietnamese for two years still have nowhere near the proficiency they need for classroom teaching, according to Ms. Ponce.

"We are not pushing for fluency at this point," she says. "But it's very important for them to have an acquaintance with the language, so that they can say a few basic phrases, put the children at ease, and also understand the structure of that language, because if you know the syntax of Vietnamese, you can remedy mistakes in English."

On the other hand, Alhambra has been successful in recruiting fluent Spanish- and Chinese-speaking teachers, Ms. Ponce says, and less than one-third of its 120 bilingual classrooms are now staffed by teachers on waiver. Few districts have been so fortunate.

"There's no way my teachers are going to

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become proficient in Spanish," says Jean Nakano, principal of Gobbin Elementary School in Baldwin Park. "So if you hit them with the fact that they're going to have to learn Spanish right off the bat, you're not going to get anywhere in my district."

Reliance on Aides

At Ms. Nakano's school, only 2 of the 14 bilingual teachers are certified. But Baldwin Park has proven that bilingual programs can work even with such a handicap, Ms. Nakano says, pointing to former LEP students who are scoring at or above state norms by 6th grade. Her approach has been to give special training and support to instructional aides, relieving them from recess duty, for example, so they can meet with teachers to discuss classroom problems.

While acknowledging the success of Baldwin Park's program, Norman C. Gold of the state's bilingual-education office says: "This is a solution which makes us uneasy. There are competent instructional aides who are getting instructional aides' salaries, who by all reports are credentialable teachers except for a couple of rules they can't pass."

For such aides, who come largely from language-minority backgrounds, the main obstacle is the California Basic Education Skills Test, a reform-movement invention that all new teachers must pass. Critics argue that the unrealistic level of English proficiency required by the test has dried up natural sources of bilingual teachers—native speakers of minority languages and many competent educators from other countries. Among students who had completed teacher training in 1984-85, only 46 percent of Hispanics and 58 percent of Asians were able to pass the examination.

While Spanish-background students constitute 53 percent of the school population in Los Angeles, "only 10 percent of the teachers [come] from that ethnic group," says Concepcion M. Valadez of the Center for Language Education and Research. Consequently, most bilingual teachers must learn Spanish as a second language, she says. "In Los Angeles, it is possible for a limited-English-speaking child to go [through] the six years of elementary school and never be taught by a fully credentialed teacher."

Barely 15 percent of Hispanic high-school graduates were even eligible for admission to California's two university systems that year, "and only a fraction of those actually enrolled," according to the Assembly's research office.

Overall, the state schools of education appear to have given little emphasis to training bilingual teachers. They produced just 450 candidates for bilingual credentials in 1985-86, including 14 in the prestigious University of California system.

Ms. Spiegel-Coleman of the Los Angeles County Department of Education says she finds it frustrating that the colleges are still turning out large numbers of teachers destined to start their careers on bilingual waivers.

"The reality is," she says, "everybody sitting in the regular teacher-training] program is going to find himself in a bilingual classroom, because those are the classrooms that are open. Nice teachers are not placed in the 'better' schools—if you're in a system long enough, you transfer there. The openings are in the minority communities, and in our county, the largest minority community is the one that doesn't speak English."

Two years ago, the legislature passed a bill requiring the state's colleges to train teacher candidates in E.S.L. approaches and in ways of working with students from minority-language backgrounds, but it was vetoed by Governor Deukmejian.

Trying To Cope

Los Angeles, with the state's largest LEP enrollment—160,000 this year—lacks even sufficient numbers of waivered teachers to staff its bilingual classrooms. Last year, only 58,773 of the more than 111,000 LEP children in the district's elementary schools received "a truly bilingual program" with a certified or waivered teacher, according to Carmen Schroeder of the district's bilingual-education office; 29,228 students received instruction under an "individualized language program," and 23,210 received no services.

To compensate for the teacher shortage, the district is trying to upgrade the skills of its 7,000 paraprofessionals. Ideally, aides should be helping individual students, explains Manuel Perez, director of the aide-training program, but about half are providing direct classroom instruction.

"Many of these people do bring with them a number of skills—the culture, the knowledge of the community, the language to help the child understand what's going on in the classroom," he says. "By systematically working with this group"—enrolling them in bilingual strategies and in working cooperatively with waivered teachers—"we can make some strides toward providing quality education."

The district is also experimenting with approaches that are designed to make better use of its limited teaching resources. Under a waiver of the state law's requirement that English-speakers make up at least one-third of a bilingual classroom, the Eastman School in East Los Angeles has concentrated the efforts of certified Spanish bilingual teachers on LEP children by grouping students by language for most lessons.

As part of the "case studies" project coordinated by the state education department, Eastman students have posted steady increases in achievement-test scores.

Another organizational model, developed by the Rosser School in Sun Valley, uses team teaching and, unlike Eastman's approach, does not require an exemption from the state. More than 80 percent of Rosser's students are Hispanic, and 45 percent are classified as LEP, but only 10 of the school's 17 teachers have bilingual certifications.

Put simply, Rosser's solution was to let Spanish-proficient teachers teach Spanish and the waivered teachers teach English, grouped in bilingual, cooperative teams. Each team makes decisions on how to handle individual students' needs, and "block scheduling" maximizes the contribution of each teacher.

Students are divided for a two-hour "language-arts block" every morning in their native language, and then for a 45-minute lesson in the second language—E.S.L. for Spanish-speakers and E.S.L., or Spanish as a second language, for English-speakers. Other subjects are taught in bilingual or English classrooms.

The teachers found that by cooperative teaching—getting together and saying, 'I can do this part, but not that part'—they were able to provide the services that were necessary," says Toni Marcuzzi, Rosser's former bilingual coordinator, who is now on the district's bilingual-education staff.

Unlike Eastman, however, Rosser has put little emphasis on methodology. Some teachers use the "concurrent-translation method"—in which a teacher simply repeats a lesson in two languages—while others alternate languages on different days. "Teachers will switch and try different things—whatever seems to work," according to James Morris, who now oversees the program.

Also in contrast to Eastman, student scores at the Rosser School have shown no dramatic improvements, perhaps reflecting, Mr. Morris says, a constant influx of new LEP students into the school.

Methodology Matters

In recent years, many researchers have roundly criticized concurrent translation as ineffective and perhaps harmful. Studies of the methodology have shown that LEP children simply learn to ignore the language that they do not understand, and thus receive little "comprehensible input" in English. This problem is compounded when the method is combined with E.S.L. techniques based on grammar rather than on intelligible communication.

Worse, according to many researchers, concurrent translation can encourage a type of "code switching"—a mixing of two languages, such as "Spanglish"—which retards linguistic development in either tongue.

Nevertheless, concurrent translation and grammar-based E.S.L. are still widely used in bilingual programs, not only in California but throughout the United States.

Many districts in Los Angeles County have dropped these methods in favor of approaches that stress native-language development and communication-based E.S.L., according to Ms. Spiegel-Coleman, but old ways remain predominant in the city's schools.

"I think the leadership in L.A. Unified knows that [those methods do not make] a good program," she says. "But it hasn't gotten down to the troops yet. It is just a real problem, with staff development."

In addition to the enormous cost—and logistical difficulties in many year-round schools, where one-quarter of the staff is absent at any time—the district had previously trained thousands of teachers "to do concurrent translation and grammar-based E.S.L.," Ms. Spiegel-Coleman says. "Now they have to bring them all back and train them not to. They're in the process of doing that, but it's a huge job."

Training the Trainers

"In districts that are smaller, it's easier to get the message out," she adds. Since 1980, one strategy for doing so has been the Multidistrict Trainer of Trainers Institute, developed by Marguerita Calderon, a professor of education at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Starting with the view that staff development is crucial to effective bilingual programs, the institute concentrates on putting the latest theory and practical knowledge about methods in the hands of district personnel who train bilingual and E.S.L. teachers.

Trainers are schooled in the "theoretical framework" developed by the California State Department of Education, featuring sessions by such well-known researchers as Stephen D. Krashen and Tracy D. Terrell, the originators of the "natural approach" to E.S.L. Effective instructional techniques are demonstrated, and trainees learn how to coach teachers in the classroom, which is seen as an essential step in instituting the new methods.

The program has had a major effect in districts where improved student achievement has converted skeptics, Ms. Spiegel-Coleman says, and as graduates of the training institute rise to higher leadership positions, the new approaches are becoming firmly established.

Pat Almeda, a former bilingual coordinator in the Montebello Unified School District, is one such graduate. Working with principals like John Myers of the Bell Gardens Elementary School, she developed one of Los Angeles County's most successful programs. A 1985 study of 1,700 6th graders who had completed bilingual education in the district found that their reading skills significantly surpassed their peers in English-only classrooms.

One key to the program's success, Ms. Almeda believes, is staff development that puts "tremendous emphasis" on the latest E.S.L. techniques and on developing native-language skills "to ensure that when kids went into English based [transfer] they had a strong foundation in difficult words."

Ms. Almeda stresses the importance of classifying LEP children correctly—not always an easy task. "They tend to feel on emotions," she says, "especially those who have attended an English-only preschool. The surface levels of the language are there. However, their thinking is still in the primary language. If you ask them 'why' or 'how' questions, they can't answer. When you put them into an all-English program, they fail miserably."

Mr. Myers adds, "If you exit a kid too early, generally the English is not adequate to support the concept level, and he has difficulty in the thinking areas like science and social studies, health, and mathematics."

At Bell Gardens, an overwhelming majority of the children are Hispanic and poor, and 80 percent enter kindergarten with limited English proficiency. Students complete the transition to English relatively late—around 4th grade, compared with 2nd grade in many bilingual programs. But by that time, unlike children in "early exit" programs, they are able to achieve "at grade level" in mathematics, science, Mr. Myers says.

As word about Montebello's program has spread, the district has had little difficulty recruiting certified bilingual teachers, even with limited pay incentives, Ms. Almeda says. "Our principals interview maybe five or six for every position they have."

Asian Bilingual Programs

Regardless of what language LEP children bring with them to school, says Ms. Perez, Alhambra's bilingual coordinator, "strong primary-language skills predict success in English." This point has been illustrated among Chinese children in Alhambra, who were the subject of a study two years ago by Edmund W. Lee, director of Alhambra's orientation and assessment center for new elementary students.

Mr. Lee found that 4th, 5th, and 6th graders who had completed the district's bilingual program performed as well as, or better than, their English-speaking peers from both Chinese and non-minority backgrounds in reading, and significantly better in language. In mathematics, both groups of Chinese students scored substantially higher than non-minority students.

The results vindicate the state's 36th-percentile criterion for reclassifying LEP students, Mr. Lee says. While some have argued that the high standard leaves many children to languish "in the LEP category forever, [the study] shows that if we use that as a target point, they really take off afterward."

On the other hand, Mr. Lee says, his research undercuts what he says is the stereotype—often invoked by opponents of bilingual education—that Asian students acquire English proficiency rapidly and succeed without special language programs. The Chinese students in Alhambra differed considerably in their achievement.

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Districts Often Rely on Aides To Meet Instructional Demands

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to reports. Cantonese-speakers—largely "ethnic Chinese" from Vietnam, who tend to have a low socioeconomic status—performed at lower levels in language and reading than Mandarin-speakers from Taiwan.

The Alhambra district's Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese bilingual programs differ from its program for Hispanic children by teaching initial literacy in English rather than in the native language.

Asian language skills, unlike those in Spanish, transfer less readily to English because of radical differences in alphabet, Ms. Ponce says, although she acknowledges that this remains a point of controversy among researchers.

Asian children receive pre-reading instruction in their native languages, she explains, along with "an oral-language-development program to continue to develop their vocabularies," which speeds their acquisition of English when they encounter the same concepts in the second language.

Children also receive instruction in English as a second language, preferably from their own teacher rather than in "pullout classes," Ms. Ponce says.

"The very best kind of E.S.L. is contextual and tied to other learning," she says. "It's only the classroom teacher who can say: 'I'm doing a unit on dinosaurs in science. For E.S.L., I'll build dinosaur vocabulary.'"

The hesitation to teach children to read in Asian languages, however, is not universal.

The ABC Unified School District in nearby Cerritos sponsors a Korean bilingual program that includes native-language literacy, according to Lilia Stapleton, ABC's bilingual coordinator. And the district hopes eventually to add initial reading in its Chinese program, she says, even though "it's a much more complex writing system than the Korean."

Parent Attitudes

Many children do learn to read in Chinese "Saturday schools," Ms. Ponce says, noting that such schools are "a longstanding tradition among Chinese immigrants, even in Vietnam." Parents prefer "old-country-style teachers" to teach Chinese culture, she adds, and in public school, "they want to maximize the time that children hear English."

Initially, Asian parents were apprehensive about bilingual education—indeed, many affluent Chinese settled in the district so their children would learn English—but they came to understand that Alhambra's schools were "using the primary language as a medium toward that end," Ms. Ponce says.

Ms. Stapleton reports a similar process of acceptance for bilingual education in her district. She adds, however, that Asian parents "want their children in and out too quickly. Our challenge is to help the parents ease off and not put so much pressure on their kids."

Hispanic parents also have fears about bilingual education, often based on their own bitter personal experiences with learning English, says Pat Almada, the former bilingual coordinator in Montebello.

"Many parents in their late 30's and early 40's were severely punished for speaking Spanish in school. They want their kids to have an easier time, and they say, 'I want only English.'"

But Montebello school officials have usually succeeded in explaining that their children will have an easier time, not a harder time," in bilingual programs, Ms. Almada says. "Out of 8,000 LEP students each year, we have about 100 withdrawals—parents who choose for their children not to participate."

In Los Angeles County, bilingual educators report a generally high degree of community support for their programs, in contrast to widespread skepticism a decade ago. Last year, Monterey Park went through a divisive struggle over whether to declare English the town's official language—a campaign that many Chinese residents saw as a backlash against their increasing numbers. But the controversy had no effect on the Alhambra school board's support for bilingual education, Ms. Ponce says.

From her vantage point in the county office of education, Ms. Spiegel-Coleman says that district officials who were "adamant about trying to circumvent the law [and] would never ask for help" 10 years ago are now asking, "What can we do? How can we help our staffs? Can you help us recruit teachers?"

Pockets of Resistance

Support is more mixed in neighboring Orange County, however, where LEP student enrollment jumped from 23,000 in 1980 to 47,500 last year; in fact, some communities have actively resisted bilingual education.

In Santa Ana, district officials a few years ago decided to turn down federal funds rather than initiate bilingual education, but they backed down when citizens sued, according to Gil Martinez, an assistant superintendent in the Orange County Department of Education.

Today, some Santa Ana teachers—especially those who fear the chance of learning a new language or finding another job—have become a center of opposition to the waiver system.

"Most of the districts will do everything they can to be in compliance [with state law]. But there's a difference between compliance and quality," says Martha A. Martini, a bilingual-teacher trainer in the county education department.

Some districts try to ensure that students exit from bilingual programs within one or two years, she says, citing a recent superintendent in the Anaheim city school district who rewarded schools on the basis of their speed in reclassifying LEP children.

At the same time, Ms. Martini says, Orange County has some excellent bilingual programs, especially where schools have participated in the Multidistrict Trainer of Trainers Institute.

This year, Los Angeles Unified launched a "two way" model of bilingual instruction, both for educational reasons and as a public-relations gesture, officials say. At the request of upper-middle-class parents in West Los Angeles, the district has enrolled English-speaking children in a Spanish bilingual program, on "additive bilingual" model with a goal of teaching them a useful second language.

"In the beginning, we were hesitant to get involved," says Carmen Schroeder of the district's bilingual-education office. "We have such a great need to provide bilingual teachers for LEP kids. But we realized it was a big advantage to have [a Spanish] immersion program, because living in Southern California, it's really a plus—it's almost a necessity—to be bilingual."

"We believe it will be a wonderful way of joining hands with two very different ethnic groups," she adds. "And if the majority of the community understands that to know a second language is to your benefit, that will be a big plus for the bilingual program."

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